



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12th MARCH 2024
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr M Foster (Mayor)
Cllr M Knight (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr P Guilcher
Cllr J Jones
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
Cllr A Skilton
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr I Campbell – Community Development Manager
Mr H Henderson – Public Realm Manager
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 26 (8 in chamber, 18 online)

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor 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 Mayor advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr G Barrett, Cllr M North, Cllr S Sajid.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Russell for 10e, Cllr Strachan for 5a, Cllr Woodhead & Cllr Foster for 10i.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Town Mayor's announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Ms Sarah Desborough-Smith, Biggleswade Resident

Ms Desborough-Smith, who participated in the meeting via zoom, asked about Item 9f, Jubilee Garden Tiny Forest Path & Gateway Report and requested further information. She indicated that she was supportive of this initiative but wanted to know where and when the trees were going to be planted and what type of trees they were going to be in relation to the vicinity of her property.

The Mayor, responding to Ms Desborough-Smith explained that most of the information was on the Council's webpage and that further consultations were going to take place with regards to determining where the fence was going to be removed and how the paths were going to be laid. The Mayor noted that the Committee Clerk would follow the matter up by supplying more information.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

Mr Paul Belton and guests, Carter Jonas.

Mr Belton and his team presented their new proposal of access arrangements for the proposed Hallam development on the land north of Biggleswade.

Mr Belton explained that 'Application 1' which was an application seeking the development of 416 homes, had been refused for various reasons, mainly focused on access arrangements of Furzenhall Road.

He went on to note that they have been working on a new access arrangement for this property ahead of their second application for development of this site. Mr Belton and his team explained that the main part of the site plan remains unchanged with regards to the overall master plan; reiterating that the big changes were the access points from Baden Powell way.

The remainder of the presentation focused on the new access arrangements showing that 340 homes would be accessed from Baden Powell Way whilst 74 homes would be served off from Furzenhall Road.

Mr Julian Clarke, TPA, explained that the new access strategy proposed a fourth road to lead off from the Potton Road, Baden Powell Way roundabout, which would be to essentially construct a 6.5m wide carriageway, with an LTN 120 standard footway/cycleway on its southern side. Mr Clarke indicated that they were working with CBC in so far as designing appropriate locations for bus stops, giving easier access to bus services for residents over time.

Access from Furzenhall Road would largely follow the similar design principle to that proposed as part of Application 1, but they were working with CBC to determine the possible location of an emergency road/bus gate between the two parcels of land. Mr Clarke noted that the access strategy responds to the points raised in the committee in August last year; particularly in terms of access. He explained that an extensive data collection exercise was carried out which encompassed around 24 junctions across the town.

Mr Clarke pointed out that since their first application, changes had arisen as the land east of Biggleswade now had planning permission. This was being fully considered in their planning application.

The presentation gave an indication of some of the possible highway works and improvements the company were seeking to bring forward such as calming proposals on Furzenhall Road which could take the form of an imprint style asphalt. The slide also included an indicative proposal for a possible right turn lane at Potton Road/Drove Road to manage the increase level of demand. Mr Clarke indicated that CBC have asked that the company contemplate a mini roundabout at that location and added that both options were being considered by independent road safety auditors before the final application is submitted.

At the end of the presentation, Mr Belton reiterated that the principle change in the master plan was the focus on highways and access arrangements as they sought to resolve the specific reasons for refusal.

Members' questions focused on clarification around roads, access arrangements, traffic management and footpaths in trying to understand the study. Members asked about how this was associated with the transportation matter for currently consented development such as land east.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cllr Jones enquired if CBC officers had come with any further information about the cable ties that had been strewn along the pathway by the railway line. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships confirmed that CBC officers explained that the ties would be buried underground once the work to the path had been completed. He added that he would be forwarding the email to Cllr Jones for her information.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Draft Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on 13th February 2024.

8. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Knight enquired about any follow-up information from CBC regarding the Jerk Hub application. Mr Hosseini confirmed that despite chasing CBC, no more information had yet been received.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Clear Pavement Policy E-Petition

Members discussed the motion put forward by Cllr Skilton which stated:

"This Council resolves to formally express its support for the Clear Pavement Policy e-petition currently under consideration by Central Bedfordshire Council. The adoption of this policy is crucial for ensuring safe and accessible pavements for all residents, particularly those with mobility challenges, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, parents with pushchairs, blind and partially sighted people. We recognize the significance of this initiative in promoting a more inclusive and barrier-free community. This council also commits to using our social media platforms and other communication channels to share the link for the e-petition and to actively encourage our residents to sign the petition, reinforcing our collective commitment to enhancing the quality of life within our community for all residents."

Cllr Skilton said the motion focused on vulnerable people, as well as people with pushchairs, who use the streets anywhere in Central Bedfordshire; not just in Biggleswade.

He explained that in the LCWIP that was consulted on by CBC last year, it was proposed to separate cyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic on London Road. However, even though they are separate from vehicles, they are not separate from each other, and this, in his view, was unacceptable.

Cllr Skilton said the aim was for the message to be simple and clear in the e-petition.

Members proposed an amendment to accept motion without the Council committing to use social media platforms and other communication channels to promote it – in other words remove the last four lines of the motion.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the motion to read: "This Council resolves to formally express its support for the Clear Pavement Policy e-petition currently under consideration by Central Bedfordshire Council. The adoption of this policy is crucial for ensuring safe and accessible pavements for all residents, particularly those with mobility challenges, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, parents with pushchairs, blind and partially sighted people. We recognize the significance of this initiative in promoting a more inclusive and barrier-free community".

b. **Brunel Drive Play Area**

Members discussed the report by the Public Realm Manager and Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the three key decisions put forward by Officers which stated that:

1. The Town Council should sign the agreement and place an order for equipment. Delivery would be in early July 2024 with installation soon after and an official opening in September.
2. As two viable quotes were received and evaluated, the Town Council should consider suspending financial regulations (sourcing three viable quotes) to progress this project.
3. The Town Council should, after considering this project in the round of other PWLB projects, use the PWLB allocation of £44,994 for Brunel drive, and additionally draw down £3,376 from the Town Council's general reserves.

c. **Kitelands Project Update**

The Head of Governance who presented the report highlighted that Location One on the plans provided was the preferred location recommended in the report. He noted there had been speculation as to why the installer had not carried out a CAT scan on the entire area despite being asked to on several occasions.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** the following:

- That the installer should conduct a complete cat scan and digital mapping of the entire site at an additional indicative £700. This action will facilitate project phase two.
- That Officers brief Tritax Symmetry of the final location decision and any associated potential delays if appropriate.

d. **Fleet Replacement Update Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report, the proposed benefits and agree:

- On decision one to procure two new vehicles in keeping with the original resolution, allow Officers to vire up to £445 from the Town Council's capital reserves for 2024-25,
- Enable Officers to place orders for the two vehicles with a delivery from April 2024, likely to be November 2024.

e. **General Insurance Policy Renewal 24/25 Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and move the recommendation which said:

- a) The Town Council suspend Section 17.2 of the Financial Regulations:

17. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

17.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all Members of Council.

- b) That Members resolve to renew the existing reviewed insurance policy as per the quote provided in Appendix A.

f. **Jubilee Garden Tiny Forest Path & Gateway Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships explained that groundworks were due to commence on Wednesday 13th of March where the landscaper would be preparing the ground ready for planting on the 20th of March.

He noted that the project team as well as Officers had reached out to volunteers to participate in the planting of the 600 trees. Following on from that, phase 2 and phase 3 of the project would take shape once the consultation period with members of the public had been completed.

Members noted that residents had made representations particularly on the knock-on effects of the opening up of a gateway and establishment of a pathway due to issues relating to drug dealing.

Members underlined the need for CBC and police enforcement to be made aware of residents' concerns as well as the possible involvement of the Biggleswade Community Safety Group.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and agreed to enable Officers to proceed with the proposed consultation and to bring a report containing community feedback to the May Annual Statutory Council meeting.

g. **Bus Stop Outside Jordan's Mill**

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to support the CBC initiative in initiating the creation of a dedicated bus stop serving visitors to Jordan's Mill.

h. **Car Parking Update**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partners presented the report.

Following discussions, Members agreed to note the report and move the recommendations, with two caveats:

- To agree for Officers to draft a new contract in collaboration with the supplier for a new three-year contract and separate service level agreement, installing the parking machines on an incremental basis.
- To agree for Officers to continue to finalise the traffic regulation order (TRO) with CBC and incrementally introduce associated signage and costs.
- For any changes to the TRO to be agreed by Council.
- To pilot the changes in one car park so that any electronic bugs can be fixed before rolling out to other car parks.

i. **Meetings Schedule Update Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to defer this item until the next Town Council meeting.

j. **Management of Biggleswade Common**

Members thanked Cllr. Russell for her hard work with the Management of Biggleswade Common – Fen Reeves – in preparing a fact sheet about the Common.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation which stated that the factsheet about Biggleswade Common, its ownership and management be added to the Council website to assist the public's understanding of both the rights and obligations underpinning enjoyment of the Common.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/24/00125/FULL - 22 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8PF**

CBC have received amendments in respect of the above property: Plan No: 1177 (car parking plan), 1177 SPLP and 2 x 1177-4 PE.

The Town Council renewed their previous objection which stated that:

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds of the following:

- Impact on the appearance of the area.
- Design, appearance, layout, and materials.
- Overdevelopment due to the height of the building.

b. **CB/24/00106/FULL- 198 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8PJ**

Alterations to existing detached garage including raising of roof level, and installation of rooflights.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration.

c. **CB/23/03251/ADV - Unit 2, Symmetry Park, Gold Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8UZ**

Advertisement: Two high non-illuminated printed signs on north and west facing elevations.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration.

d. **CB/24/00299/FULL - 12 Kayser Court, Biggleswade, SG18 8BG**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments, and, noting that the extension is large, that it might not be approved as a separate dwelling or residence.

e. **CB/24/00472/FULL - 26 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

Erection of a two-storey side extension with rooflight in loft space.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

The Council would like it to be noted that it supports the views of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment report in this instance.

f. **CB/24/00371/VOC - Willow Foundation, 41 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JH**

Variation of condition 2 of planning permission CB/23/02696/FULL (Erection of outbuilding (retrospective)). Variation sought to allow the temporary consent expiry date to be extended until 31.01.2033 (9 years).

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application on the following grounds:

- The use and purpose of the building is not outlined in the planning application.
- The temporary consent of 9 years is too long. The temporary consent expiry date should be extended by 3 years only.

g. **CB/24/00436/FULL - Unit F1, Stratton Business Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8QB**

Installation of six rapid electric vehicle charging stations to six existing parking spaces and ancillary equipment.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

h. **CB/24/00357/LB – 95B High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0LA**

Listed Building: Replacement of stairwell window with a hardwood, made-to-measure frame.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

i. **CB/24/00395/REG3 - St Andrews Lower School, Brunts Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 0LY**

Erection of 4 no. modular classrooms, over two levels. Increase staff parking by 4 no. spaces. Installation of a MUGA. Replace existing window with an entrance door and side light to nursery.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

However, the Council would like to draw the CBC Officers attention to several points:

- Mitigation around privacy. As the modular classrooms will be two levels, and in a residential area, it should be ensured that classroom windows are fitted with privacy glass.
- Clarity is needed on the actual number of parking spaces and where these will be.
- The temporary nature of the build should be no longer than 10 years.

j. **CB/24/00413/REG3 - St Andrews Lower School, Bantock Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8UQ**

Installation of 2 temporary modular classrooms, extend covered walkway for access and create a temporary hard standing car park.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

However, the Council would like to draw the CBC Officers attention to the following point:

- The temporary nature of the build and the car park should be no longer than 10 years.

k. **CB/TCA/24/00061 - Ivel House, Mill Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8AZ**

Works to a tree within a Conservation Area: Prune back from building by 1m to Yew Tree (coloured blue and red).

The Town Council **NOTED** the planning application.

l. **CB/TRE/24/00111 - 11 Wharf Mews, Biggleswade, SG18 0AW**

Works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order: Yew Tree 3.5m reduction, Ash tree reduction up to a 3.5m, Sycamore tree reduction to an and up to a 3.5m and the removal of deadwood, these works are set to be completed as part of maintenance to keep the trees healthy as well as promoting new growth.

The Town Council **NOTED** the planning application.

m. **CB/TCA/24/00098 - White Hart Public House, 23-24 Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS.**

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Fell and remove 1 x Horse Chestnut - the tree is full of canker and in a declining condition.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments, subject to the correct tree being felled.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members **NOTED** that the February accounts closed down on Wednesday 6th March. February position statements and a projected outturn for 2023/2034 will be presented to Council on 9th April.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Crab Lane/ Chestnut Avenue, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

b. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Bonds Lane, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

c. **Proposed Temporary Bridleway Closure – Bridleway No. 58**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

d. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

e. **A00433 Station Road, Biggleswade - Waiting Restrictions**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

f. **A New Local Plan**

Members briefly discussed the report by Cllr Russell and noted the outcome of the meeting both she and Cllr Barrett attended, which was hosted by CBC.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **BRCC Service Level Agreement (SLA)**

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships. Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to note the report and proceed with the proposed Service Level Agreement as set out.

b. **Kings Reach Update**

Members assessed the information provided by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and **RESOLVED** to consider a report to come to Council.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.30pm**