

25th April 2024

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:	Peter Tarrant (Town Clerk & Chief Executive) Karim Hosseini (Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships) Kathrine Chambers (Committee Clerk)	
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) Stephen Mooring	
	(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 **25th April 2024**, commencing at **7.00 pm** at **Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DL**. 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. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. 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_YWWmasgHQb-q8Wo4h-EHDg



5. UPDATES FROM CBC AND BTC COUNCILLORS

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting held on **18th January 2024 (attached)**.

7. MATTERS ARISING

From the Minutes of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting** held on **18th January 2024**.

8. CO-OPTION PROCESS

- a. For Members to receive an oral update from Karim Hosseini relating to the induction process.

9. UK SPF

- a. For Members to receive an oral update from Mr. Mooring.

10. S106 REPORT

- a. For Members to receive and consider an oral update from Cllr. Tranter and Cllr. How.

11. CBC FORWARD PLANNING

- a. For Members to receive and consider a written report from Sarah Hughes.

12. LOCAL PLAN WORKSHOPS

- a. For Members to receive and note the Local Plan Briefing Note from CBC.

13. EXEMPT

- a. (Leisure Provision and Sports Facilities in Biggleswade).
- b. (Co-option process).

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting is scheduled for:

- a. Thursday 11th June 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 18TH JANUARY 2024 at 7.00 PM**

Present:	BTC: Cllr M Russell (Vice Chairman), Cllr C Thomas, Cllr D Albone, Cllr S Patel (via Zoom) CBC: Cllr G Tranter (Chairman), Cllr G Fage, Cllr Dr. H Whitaker, Cllr P How BTC Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships: Karim Hosseini BTC Administration & HR Manager: Helen Calvert
In Attendance:	CBC Community Engagement Manager: Sarah Hughes Co-opted Member: Cliff Andrews CBC: Stephen Mooring, Beverley Gaynor, Anna Bosworth (zoom)
Members of the public:	3

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

Mr. P Tarrant, Ms F Gumush, Cllr M North.

NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Central Bedfordshire Joint Committees

Cllr Tranter and Cllr Russell met with executive members of various Joint Committees across Central Bedfordshire on 6th December 2023. The meeting provided valuable insight into the roles and purposes of the various joint committees across the county.

Langford and Biggleswade Wind Farm Community Fund

The Community Fund is due to receive the next S106 payment and will be inviting applications for people to consider this at the next funding panel. The form to apply for funding is on the Central Bedfordshire Council website and will be shared to all members of the Joint Committee. Cllr Tranter encouraged members to share this application form with their contacts.

4. 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 members of the public wished to speak.

5. UPDATES FROM CBC AND BTC COUNCILLORS

Market Square/Bus Lanes

Cllr Russell notified members that the Town Council is discussing the future of the Town Centre and that this will be shared with the Committee in due course. Two of the main points to consider is the future of Century House and the buses. It is critical that the bus exit lane is closed in order to give more room on the Market Square. There still needs to be bus stops in the Market Square but not the current arrangements. Central Bedfordshire Council were reviewing the Market Square bus arrangements however there has not yet been any further communication on this.

The following was **AGREED**:

- That Central Bedfordshire Councillors raise the Market Square bus arrangements with relevant executive Members.
- That Cllr Whitaker raise Market Square bus arrangements with Cllr Ford and report back at the next committee meeting.
- That Cllr Fage contact Nick Shaw on the Market Square bus arrangements and feedback at the next Committee meeting.

Play Street Scheme

Members discussed the free play street scheme whereby residents come together to give children a chance to play freely and safely close to their homes. Biggleswade Town Councillors were aware of this scheme and the Town Council had been formally consulted. The Town Council was not supportive of the concept and did not want to see it in Biggleswade. CBC officers highlighted that this is a community led initiative, but with advice from local councils and government.

Bus Interchange

Cllr Whitaker provided an update on the bus interchange work. The remedial work is currently underway. Once the remedial work is completed, there will then be a retest with the buses. Subject to these tests going well the interchange will then open.

Sewage at Dunton Lane

Cllr Whitaker informed members that the sewage issues at Dunton Lane have now been resolved. There has also been a contact number added to the area which residents can call if any further issues arise.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members reviewed and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of **Thursday 12th October 2023**.

7. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Whitaker informed Members that the shops in the Market Square now have a radio system where they can communicate with each other and alert each other of shoplifting incidences.

Members were informed that a request for an additional light on the path to the Scout hut – Footpath 42 has been submitted.

Cllr Tranter provided an update on the overgrown shrubbery on Saxon Road and Chambers Way roundabouts. This was completed in late November 2023, and has now been scheduled into the cutting rotation.

Members requested an update on the streetlights on Saxon Drive.

Cllr Tranter responded that initial works did take place on the lighting, but this only lasted a short period of time. The lights were then reinspected, and an issue was found with a private feed and damaged riser. Work to this has restored lighting on Baden Powell Way, but Saxon Drive remains unlit. The company are currently in the process of inspecting this again.

Members also questioned when the crossings leading off the Orchard Chase development would become live.

Cllr Tranter noted that the information required from the developer has been obtained, and that a site approval test is currently being arranged with Luton Borough Council.

8. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

8a. Karim Hosseini provided Members with an update on possible work for funding from UKSPF:

- Discussions have been ongoing with Central Bedfordshire Council since August relating to the electrical power supply improvements to the Market Square. The power infrastructure inspection will be done by CBC using s106 funding and is not a part of the UKSPF application, the works will be sequenced appropriately.
- As part of the draft application to level pavements and pedestrian areas in the Market Square, a series of photos have been taken displaying the most in-need areas of repair. CBC and Highways are arranging a site visit to cost up the works.
- Blue and brown Town Centre directional signs were included in the same application to level pavements and pedestrian areas.
- The regional and national providers of car parking signage have been written to in regard to providing quotes for installing appropriate car parking signage and digital informational boards at the north and south ends of the town. Estimates are pending.

It was noted that a previous Town Council meeting resolved to provide a refurbishment of the public conveniences and doors to improve their appearance and security.

It was felt that the town should improve accessibility, for example making the Bigg Theatre wheelchair accessible.

It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Tranter and How will produce a report surrounding S106 provision for the next Joint Committee meeting. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships indicated it was also imperative to hold a meeting with the Highways department at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were keen to progress this and highlighted the need to spend this funding sensibly and to an agreed sequence.

8b. UKSPF and Business Support

Anna Bosworth, Head of Investment, Employment and Skills at Central Bedfordshire Council, delivered a presentation update on UKSPF investment in programmes to support local businesses.

Members were pleased with the update and felt that the Town Council should help with publicising this further. It was **AGREED** for Anna Bosworth to email material through to Karim Hosseini for Town Council promotion.

It was raised that there is a lack of apprenticeship opportunities and that it would be beneficial for CBC to work with local businesses to improve this.

It was **AGREED** for CBC to investigate action to be taken in improving Abbots Walk as it is currently in poor condition.

Members thanked Anna Bosworth for the informative presentation.

9. CBC FORWARD PLANNING

CBC provided an overview of forward planning for 2024.

It was felt that it would be more effective to have a document that highlighted the CBC forward planning that relates to Biggleswade.

It was **AGREED** to keep this as an agenda item for future Joint Committee meetings.

It was **AGREED** that Sarah Hughes produce a report for the next meeting with options.

It was **AGREED** to look at CBC Plans for Assets at a future Joint Committee meeting.

CBC Officers highlighted that youth services are under the responsibility of Town Councils in other areas and that this could be a possibility for Biggleswade in the next four years.

BTC should look at the paper that goes to the Executive Board. A Town Council Member could attend the executive meeting if there are items for improvement impacting on the Town Council.

It was **AGREED** for Cllr Whitaker to investigate Public Space protection from anti-social behaviour and to provide information to the Town Council.

10. BIGGLESWADE STRATEGIC TOWN PRIORITIES

Members discussed priorities to inform Section 106 funding, planning & alignment to BJC priorities. It was felt that clarity was needed on S106 funds to then be able to price up and see which funds can be applicable for different pieces of work.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to see what facilities can be prioritised. Members felt that the Green Wheel needed to be improved and safeguarded.

It was agreed important to put a list together of priorities and to understand how BTC and CBC work to tie together different areas of the town.

It was **AGREED** to discuss S106 spending items at the next Joint Committee meeting.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 25th of April 2024 and would take place at the Orchard Community Centre at 7pm.

Meeting Closed at 8.56pm

DRAFT

Biggleswade Joint Committee

25 April 2024

Forward Planning

Report of: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager

Purpose of this report

To highlight to the Joint Committee the forward plan of key decisions to be made by the Executive at Central Bedfordshire Council and the workplans for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the report**

Introduction

1. The Forward Plan of key decisions to be made by the Executive at Central Bedfordshire Council is attached in Appendix A
2. The Agenda and Workplans for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Sustainable Communities and for Social Care, Health and Housing are attached in Appendix B

Options for consideration if appropriate

3. The Joint Committee can review the Forward Plan and Workplans and identify if there is anything relevant to the purpose of the Joint Committee as set out in its Terms of Reference

Committee Priorities

4. The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committees are set out in Part 3D of the CBC Constitution and determine the purpose as:
 - 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

Conclusion and Next Steps

5. To identify items that might be added to the BJC workplan for further discussion so that the views of the Joint Committee can contribute to the decision-making process.

Appendices

None

Appendix A: Executive Forward Plan Executive

[26.1 Forward Plan of Key Decisions - May 2024 \(2\).pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

Appendix B: OSC Workplans

Social Care Health and Housing OSC

[15.1 SCHH OSC work programme report.pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

[15.2 Appendix A.pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

[15.3 Appendix B.pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

Sustainable Communities OSC

[13.2 240422 Work Programme App A.pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

[13.3 240422 Work Programme App B.pdf \(azeusconvene.com\)](#)

Background Papers

None

Report author(s): Sarah Hughes

CBC Community Engagement Manager

Sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Local Plan Briefing Note

January 2024

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is a key policy document prepared by a local authority that sets the vision and framework for the future growth of an area. It is supported by a substantial evidence base and informed through engagement with local communities, businesses and key stakeholders. It determines the future strategy for growth by addressing needs and opportunities in relation to homes, jobs, community facilities and infrastructure, as well as safeguarding the environment and enabling adaptation to climate change.

The Local Plan can include policies that:

- Set the strategy for future growth and deliver the Council's vision and strategies.
- Allocate land for development and set out infrastructure requirements to meet identified needs.
- Seek to manage new development by the setting the requirements for affordable housing, standards for design and designating ecological sites and green spaces, for example.
- Protect and enhance Central Bedfordshire's social, environmental and economic assets.

Once in place, the Local Plan becomes a key part of the statutory development plan for the area, alongside Neighbourhood Plans and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and provides the policy framework for making decisions on individual planning applications.

Why do we need a new Local Plan?

National planning policy and legislation requires Local Plans to be reviewed at least every five years from the date of adoption, to assess what has changed since the plan was adopted and whether there are any policies that need updating. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan was adopted in July 2021, but contains a policy (Policy SP1a) that required us to commence a partial review of the Plan within 6 months of its adoption.

The review process commenced in January 2022 and has now concluded that there have been significant changes at both a national and local level that necessitate the need to prepare a [new Local Plan](#).

At a local level, a series of corporate strategies have been adopted by the Council since our current Local Plan, including:

- 2050 Vision
- Strategic Plan
- Sustainability Plan
- Economic Strategy and Implementation Plan.



At a national and regional level:

- National planning policy has been updated on four occasions to strengthen the role of design and places an increased emphasis on sustainable transport, the environment, sustainability, and biodiversity.
- The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act proposes significant changes to the planning system, including the introduction of new National Development Management Policies.
- The Environment Act has set a mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Further announcements have been made in relation to the route and delivery of East West Rail.

What are the advantages of preparing a new Local Plan?

Commencing a new Local Plan will ensure we have a longer-term strategy and policies that are consistent with recent and emerging updates to national policy and legislation. It is an opportunity to work collaboratively with Councillors, Town and Parish Council's, residents, local businesses and other stakeholders to define how Central Bedfordshire will grow in a sustainable and thought-out way, whilst enabling greater sustainability and environmental considerations to shape and be embedded within the Local Plan from the outset.

In the meantime, the policies in our adopted Local Plan, supported by recent guidance such as the Design Guide (2023) and Parking Standards (2023), will continue to deliver the Council's ambitions relating to high quality design and sustainability, for example. There are also priorities that can be delivered without having a new Local Plan in place such as Biodiversity Net Gain, that now has a mandatory national target, and the requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies, that will map habitats and identify priorities for improving the natural environment.

What is the status of the adopted Local Plan if we're starting a new one?

The current Local Plan was adopted in July 2021 and is considered to be up to date for the purposes of decision making. It will remain the primary document for decision making for Central Bedfordshire until it is replaced by a new Local Plan.


All sites identified for development in the adopted Local Plan (2021) and previous plans (Mid Bedfordshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2011) and South Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004)) will remain allocated and will form part of the on-going supply of new homes and employment land. This should help ensure that we maintain a five year supply of housing sites against the annual housing target, and we will continue to [monitor and report](#) on the supply on a quarterly basis.

What is the timetable for preparing the Local Plan?

The high-level timetable for preparing the new Local Plan, known as the [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS), was approved by Council on the 23 November 2023. The key milestones are:

- Commencement of the Local Plan: November 2023
- Initial engagement with CBC Councillors and Town and Parish Councils: February 2024
- Informal public engagement: March – June 2024
- Consultation on policy options (Regulation 18): February 2026
- Consultation on the final draft Local Plan (Regulation 19): September 2027



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- Examination: February 2028

What is the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and the new Local Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan are both part of the overall Development Plan for the area once adopted. The Local Plan sets out the overarching policies for the area, whereas Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by local communities and add local detail to the policies included within the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans can be developed before, after, or in parallel with the Local Plan, although the legislation requires Neighbourhood Plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies within the adopted Local Plan.

During its preparation, the new Local Plan will need to take Neighbourhood Plans that are already adopted or in the process of being prepared into consideration. However, these Neighbourhood Plans may also need to be updated to be in conformity with any new strategic policies in the new Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are valuable documents, and groups that are currently preparing, reviewing or thinking of starting Neighbourhood Plans will be encouraged to continue their progress whilst we prepare our Local Plan. We will continue to work closely and collaboratively with Neighbourhood Planning groups to ensure the content of our respective plans is coordinated as far as possible.

How can Councillors, Town and Parish Council's, residents and other key stakeholders get involved in the Local Plan?

Councillors have expressed that the Local Plan needs to be underpinned by meaningful and widespread engagement that goes above and beyond the statutory consultation requirements set out in plan making legislation.

One of the first priorities will be the preparation of an Engagement and Communication Strategy, that will set out our approach to engaging the community and other stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. It will look at innovative opportunities, new ideas and ways of engagement, as well as digital tools that may be used to further enable engagement, particularly with seldom heard groups. It will also consider options around branding, ensuring any material related to the Local Plan is clearly recognisable to all. We will be seeking input during the development of the Engagement and Communication Strategy to seek views on how they feel they and their communities can get involved.

Additional time for engagement has been built into the Local Plan timetable and there will be numerous opportunities and ways to get involved.

What are the next steps?

Work on the new Local Plan has commenced with baseline evidence studies and the Engagement and Communication Strategy.

All Local Plan decisions will need to be evidence based to ensure they fulfil the plan-making regulations. The Local Plan will be subject to independent examination, so the process must be comprehensive and robust.



Preparations are also being made towards initial engagement with Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and communities, starting in February, that will help inform the scope and vision for the Local Plan.

Contact the Strategic Growth Team...

by telephone: 0300 300 8307

by email: localplan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy



