

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE  
HELD IN PERSON AT THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE,  
SG18 8DL AND ON ZOOM ON THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025 2024 at 7.00 PM**

<b>Present:</b>	
BTC	Cllr M Russell (Deputy Chairman) Cllr D Albone Cllr G Barrett Cllr D Strachan  Cllr J Woodhead (Substitute)  <b>BTC Town Clerk &amp; Chief Executive:</b> Peter Tarrant. <b>BTC Head of Governance &amp; Strategic Partnerships:</b> Karim Hosseini. <b>BTC Committee Clerk:</b> Kathrine Chambers.
CBC	Cllr G Tranter (Chairman) Cllr G Fage  <b>CBC Community Engagement Manager:</b> Sarah Hughes.
Co-optees:	Cliff Andrews (BRCC). Carole Birtwhistle (Community Safety Group). Sam Simmons
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**

a. Nick Gurney, Cllr H Whitaker.

**b. No Apologies**

Cllr S Watkins, Cllr P How, Samantha Conder.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item**

None.

**b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

Cllr D Strachan – Item 15b.

Cllr D Albone – Item 8.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Tranter raised concerns over lack of attendance from some Members and whether the current meeting adhered to Standing Orders. Members agreed that no formal votes could be taken, but that attendance should be reconsidered in future.

**4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one registered to speak.

**5. INVITED SPEAKER**

There was none.

**6. UPDATES FROM CBC & BTC COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTEEES**

a. Cllr Fage proposed that the 'Call for Sites' be an item on the upcoming Joint Committee agenda so that Members can discuss the proposed sites.

b. Cllr Fage proposed the New Homes Bonus also be an agenda item in future, as discussed with the Town Clerk.

c. Cllr Russell raised the request for a St. Andrew's Street Pedestrian Island, for which there is still no formal response. She noted that, while the Council is encouraged to send recommendations to CBC, these often are not responded to.

Cllr Tranter added that a number of traffic management schemes are not pursued due to limited funding and that this needs to be better scheduled in future. Members discussed the lack of mechanism for parish councils to feed into the Highways Budget and how doing so would benefit both parties. Perhaps there should be a formal consultation when the Highways Programme for the following year is being put together. Members also noted that budgetary restraints could be alleviated with unallocated S106 funds.

Cllr Tranter agreed that he would write informally to Executive Members and ask for their opinions on the discussion.

d. Mr Andrews asked that co-optees are mentioned in the title of Item 5 to be inclusive of their updates and suggestions. Cllr Tranter confirmed that this would be done.

e. Cllr Tranter asked whether the Town Council had attended their S106 briefings yet. The Town Clerk confirmed that there was access training in 2024 but that the latest session is upcoming.

- f. Cllr Tranter highlighted volunteer work organised by Community Engagement and the Rights of Way teams to assist the highways contractors between Eagle Farm Road and Whittle Drive to clear undergrowth, shrubbery and mend fencing. This has increased accessibility and reduced incidents in the area.

## **7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members reviewed and agreed the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024**, subject to the noted changes being implemented. Since the meeting was not quorate, minutes will be formally approved at the next meeting

## **8. MATTERS ARISING**

### **a. BJC Workplan and CBC Exec & OSC Forward Plans**

Cllr Russell noted Cllr Whitaker's comments on the freight strategy and that the Town Council has submitted comments to the consultation.

### **b. Updates from CBC & BTC Councillors and Co-optees**

Cllr Strachan asked whether the Salamanca Group were unable to attend the meeting. Mr Hosseini responded that they have been reinvited for the next meeting.

### **c. Road Safety**

Cllr Russell reiterated the issue of raising concerns with CBC but having little response. She suggested that Officers write back to the Assistant Director for Highways and ask if they could attend a future meeting.

Cllr Fage explained that Ward Councillors have information shared with them about potential priorities for highway. Cllr Tranter added that these are usually shared in May, which means the short-term impact of their comments is low and that this process needs to begin earlier.

Ms Birtwhistle reiterated her concerns about road conditions after development and asked whether developers should be accountable for any damage. Members agreed that this should feed into the conversation with the Assistant Director for Highways and that the Council should provide a list of its priorities.

## **9. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

- a. Members asked whether any response had been received on providing "a full detailed account of history decisions" for the Kings Reach green area. Mr Hosseini confirmed that this has recently been chased but he will follow up again.
- b. Cllr Tranter confirmed that he had written to the Local Government Association about issues in Highways reporting but that he is still waiting for a response.

## **10. ROAD SAFETY**

Members asked whether the BP Pulse charging facilities on the Baulk had been fixed. Co-optees confirmed that this work was done in mid-November.

BTC Members noted recent planning applications regarding school drop off points, which the Town Council had objected to, and the lack of clear line markings. BTC

Members also noted concerns over parking on double yellow lines and pavements. CBC Members responded that these need to be reported on FixMyStreet, but that enforcement agents would need to witness parking incidents to enforce them.

CBC Members also shared that they recently received an update on FixMyStreet, which currently had 8,903 outstanding reports. This email was agreed to be shared with all Members.

## **11. S106 FUNDING**

CBC Members confirmed that the new Power BI S106 dashboard will be available soon, which shows sums in the region of £3.1 million in unallocated funding that are due to Biggleswade. Members raised concerns over the deadlines to these pots and whether the Town Council would be able to access them before they are returned to developers. Ms Hughes confirmed the session for town and parish councils on the S106 Parish reports would be held online on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January; there was over 30 bookings so far.

The Town Clerk noted recent contact with the CBC Heads of Service wherein Officers highlighted upcoming projects in detail. While this was warmly received, there has been no clear direction of travel since. The Town Clerk then suggested that lead CBC spending officers should maintain regular contact with Town & Parish Councils to ensure different funding pots are communicated effectively.

Mr Simmons asked whether any S106 funds apply to leisure centres. CBC Members confirmed that there is £235,000 uncommitted for Saxon Pool and various pots for a 3G pitch, but these are often tied into specific projects. Mr Simmons noted the need for new equipment at Saxon Gym and this should be a priority for the town.

The Town Clerk asked CBC Members how S106 Spending Officers are managed and deployed, and how best to communicate with them. Ms Hughes agreed to help facilitate a meeting with these Officers. Ms Hughes added that Spending Officers have the responsibility to request S106 monies and that this is an evidence-based process.

Members asked Ms Hughes how often consultations are held regarding funding allocation. Ms Hughes responded that for Community and Village Halls, schedules detailing the CVH facility and improvements needed are updated every two years.

Cllr Tranter reiterated the importance of engaging with surveys and consultations

## **12. RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE STRATEGY**

Cllr Russell asked whether a link to the full strategy could be provided in addition to this overview. She also suggested that the Leisure Strategy should be an upcoming agenda item once further information is available.

## **13. JOINT COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Ms Hughes noted that the Leisure Strategy could be added to the April agenda, but that flexibility is required dependent on their availability.

Ms Hughes also highlighted upcoming drop-in sessions organised by the Environment Agency regarding flooding, which she shared with Mx Chambers to further distribute. This will be attended by the flooding team and the Internal Drainage Board.

BTC Members also recommended that ongoing road safety concerns should also be a standing item to ensure that responses are received from Highways.

CBC Members asked whether the Integrated Care Board (ICB) would have any updates by the next meeting and, due to the immediacy of the Call for Sites, whether this would be suitable to be delayed to another meeting. Members noted that the ICB should be aware of the concerns that Biggleswade residents have for healthcare and dentistry. CBC Members also noted that this could be linked into the healthcare survey that was organised by Cllr Tranter, Cllr Whitaker and Cllr How.

Members discussed that the meetings schedule needs to be set for the new municipal year and the Joint Committee Workplan updated accordingly.

**14. CBC EXECUTIVE & OSC FORWARD PLAN**

Members noted the document.

**15. EXEMPT**

**a. Kings Reach Update**

Members discussed the updates on site ownership.

**b. Land North**

Members reflected on the planning inquiry result.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on the Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 and would take place at the offices of Biggleswade Town Council at 7pm.

**Meeting closed at 20:47pm.**