

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING AT THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN
COUNCIL OFFICES ON THURSDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2025 at 7.00 PM**

Present:	<p>BTC Members: Cllr. M Russell (Deputy Chairman) Cllr. G Barrett Cllr. C Thomas Cllr. D Strachan</p> <p>BTC Officers: BTC Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships: Karim Hosseini BTC Community Development Manager: Ian Campbell BTC Committee Clerk: Asia Green</p> <p>CBC Members: Cllr. G Fage (Chairman) Cllr. P How Cllr. S Watkins Cllr. Paul Daniels Cllr. Hayley Whitaker</p> <p>Co-opted Members:</p> <p>In Attendance Online:</p> <p>Carole Birtwhistle (Community Safety Group).</p> <p>CBC Officers: CBC Head of Service for Highway Maintenance: Emma Murden CBC Head of Sustainability: Stephen Mooring</p> <p>In Attendance Online:</p> <p>CBC Service Director - Assets & Capital Delivery: Iain Berry CBC Service Director - Education and SEND: Daniel Newbolt</p>
Members of the public:	None.

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 to 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

The Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting on Tuesday 18th November 2025, commenced with an exempt session at 6:00 PM, following which the meeting proceeded into the public session. Upon conclusion of the public session, the meeting returned to exempt. The matters considered during both exempt sessions are detailed in Section 12 of these minutes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a. Apologies were received from the following:

Cllr. D Albone, Cllr. G Tranter, Cliff Andrews, Nick Gurney, Sarah Hughes, Peter Tarrant, Ernest Bour.

b. The following were unable to attend but were in attendance remotely:

Carole Birtwhistle.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item

No pecuniary interests were declared.

b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item

No non-pecuniary interests were declared.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. The Chairman thanked Officers for preparing the agenda and noted that several important matters would be considered by Members during the meeting.

He further remarked that this may indicate the Committee's intention to adopt a more strategic approach going forward.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. No members of the public were present either in person or online.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. No amendments were made to the minutes.

Members reviewed and **APPROVED** the minutes as an accurate record of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of **Thursday 24th July 2025**.

6. MATTERS ARISING

a. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

7. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Chairman noted that this item is being presented in a new format compared with previous Joint Committee meetings, to ensure the committee discussions focus on strategic matters rather than operational matters.

Members briefly discussed the following items:

a. **CBC Call for Sites**

Members queried whether the January BJC meeting (15th January) might be too early to discuss the call for sites, as CBC had previously indicated that the site assessments would be available early in the new year but had not given a specific date.

Members stressed the importance of having meaningful data before discussion.

Members **REQUESTED** that the Chairman to contact Jennie Selley, Head of Planning Delivery & Building Control at Central Bedfordshire Council to confirm when the assessment document will be available and whether it can be shared before the January meeting. If the document is delayed, the Chairman will notify Members and consider rescheduling or adjusting the agenda.

b. **Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board Joint Committee attendance (BLMK ICB)**

The Chairman noted that Cllr. Whitaker and Cllr. Barrett had submitted their questions and reminded other Members to email their questions to him as soon as possible.

Members **AGREED** that the Chairman would collate all questions and forward them to the ICB ahead of the January meeting.

8. **INVITED SPEAKERS**

- a. There were no invited speakers under this section.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Draft Highways Capital Plan**

Emma Murden, Head of Service for Highway Maintenance at Central Bedfordshire Council, delivered a presentation to Members outlining the draft Highways Capital Plan.

The presentation provided an overview of works completed during 2025–26 and set out indicative proposals for 2026–27. These included rights-of-way schemes at Symmetry Park and Footpath 9, active travel improvements to cycling links around Baden Powell Way, and bus improvement schemes at Potton Road and Market Square.

Members were advised that the development of the capital programme had been challenging due to uncertainty surrounding government funding allocations. As a result, the draft programme had been prepared using assumptions based on current year funding levels. A flexible approach had been adopted, supported by a three-year pipeline of schemes to enable delivery once funding was confirmed.

Ms Murden explained that the programme was prioritised through a data-led approach, taking account of road condition surveys, safety data, and local usage. She emphasised

that the proposals remained subject to refinement and that the final programme would be presented to Full Council in February 2026.

Following the presentation, Members expressed concern that London Road, which requires frequent pothole repairs and is likely to need full resurfacing, was not prioritised in the draft plan. In addition, Members agreed that Potton Road Railway Bridge was hazardous and required urgent attention.

They also highlighted the deteriorating condition of Hitchin Street between Bonds Lane and the Market Square, where areas surrounding the drains are collapsing. Members suggested that repairs could be undertaken in partnership with Anglian Water noting that coordinating with Anglian Water on sewer works in Hitchin Street could reduce resurfacing costs and in turn reduce the burden on CBC's capital budget and improve efficiency.

The Committee unanimously **AGREED** that Footpath 9 should be removed from the programme because of imminent housing development and the risk of damage during construction. It was proposed that the associated funding be redirected to other areas within Biggleswade.

Further concerns were raised regarding skid resistance at the Baden Powell Way/Saxon Drive roundabout and rights-of-way and erosion along riverside. Members noted that both issues could potentially be addressed through partnership working, which would help to reduce the capital burden on the council. It was **REQUESTED** that additional information be provided on these matters offline.

The Committee considered the list of priority areas submitted by Biggleswade Town Council (Hitchin Street, Potton Road Bridge and London Road) and agreed that these were broadly reasonable and should be put forward to CBC for further consideration, with the exception of proposals relating to cycle and pedestrian provision, which were deemed outside the scope of this discussion.

It was **RESOLVED** to request costings from CBC Highways for the areas identified by the Town Council. Members further agreed that compliance improvements to bus-only areas should not be prioritised and that funding allocated for Footpath 9 should be repurposed. In addition, the £10,000 previously allocated for feasibility work on bus routes should be used to explore the feasibility of relocating bus stops to the High Street as part of a wider review.

b. **CBC Consultation: Proposed changes to Ivel Valley School**

Iain Berry, CBC Service Director for Assets & Capital Delivery and Daniel Newbolt, CBC Service Director for Education and SEND attended to provide clarification on the consultation process and the six options under consideration and answer the questions put forward by BTC at the Town Council Meeting on the 11th November 2025.

Members requested further clarification on the location of the site referred to in Option 4.

Mr Berry clarified that the proposed site is located on Central Bedfordshire Council-owned land off Baden Powell Way, just south of the roundabout where Planets Way meets Baden Powell Way. The land is completely undeveloped, presenting no existing constraints, though significant drainage work would be required due to level changes.

Members raised queries about the proposed London road site noting that current proposal appears to involve a two-storey building and queried whether there is sufficient space to accommodate a single-storey design. Members also expressed concern regarding the suggestion of a split-site arrangement in other options.

Mr Berry confirmed that the site is not large enough for a single-storey building.

For clarity Mr Berry gave a brief outline of the options:

- Option 1a and 1b utilise the existing Hitchmead Road site and the unused area of Stratton School, with no issues regarding the school or farm site.
- Option 2 uses the current Ivel Valley and London Road sites.
- Option 3 uses only the London Road site.
- Option 4 uses the site on the Land East of Biggleswade.
- Option 5 is to take no action.

Members noted that Option 4 is the furthest advanced in the design process, giving the most confidence in its feasibility, and asked about cost certainty for other options.

Mr Berry stated that all options are still at an early stage, with costings based on square metre estimates.

Members asked whether the sale of land after relocation had been factored into the £66 million figure provided in the consultation.

Mr Berry explained that Option 4 does not account for the sale of the Ivel Valley site, and Option 1 does not account for disposal of the proposed Option 4 site.

Members raised significant concerns about the disruption that construction would cause to vulnerable SEND pupils stating this would be unfair to SEND children and questioned the practicality of managing a split-site arrangement, particularly where a public bridleway would separate the two parts of the campus. It was also noted that the bridleway was intended to form part of the sustainable transport corridor.

Mr Berry acknowledged the disruption and said that, if Option 1b were chosen, work would be phased to minimise disruption. He added that bridleway considerations would be addressed in the next design stage, with enclosed fencing discussed as a potential solution.

Members referred to previous Department for Education (DfE) funding processes for new complex need school provision.

Mr Newbolt clarified that the free school proposal never reached the stage where DfE funding was required, and no specific allocation was made. CBC received £14 million from the DfE for SEND projects, with approximately £9 million remaining, some of which has been allocated to Ivel Valley. Funding constraints were highlighted, with officers confirming that the estimated costs presented in the consultation were gross figures and did not take account of potential land sales.

Mr Newbolt added that everyone shares the goal of achieving the best outcome for the children in the area. He noted that this project represents the largest financial commitment CBC has ever undertaken, requiring significant capital borrowing and carrying opportunity costs for other SEND provision within the region.

Members **NOTED** these points and agreed that the Town Council would respond formally to the consultation at its December.

c. **CBC Consultation Defining the High Street Areas for High Street Rental Auctions (HSRAs)**

Stephen Mooring, CBC Head of Sustainability at Central Bedfordshire Council, delivered a presentation to Members outlining the proposed High Street Rental Auctions.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Primary Shopping Area, as defined in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan, should be the designated zone where High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) powers may be applied

d. **Community Governance Review – Stage 2**

Members expressed disappointment that CBC had dismissed the agreed boundary change between Biggleswade and Edworth, despite mutual consent between the two councils and the absence of any impact on electorate numbers.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Chairman should write to the relevant officer at Central Bedfordshire Council, requesting that the proposed change be reconsidered and emphasising that the adjustment would ensure future development sites are managed appropriately. Councillor Watkins is to be copied into the correspondence.

e. **S106 Update**

The BTC Head of Governance presented a report detailing uncommitted funds and proposed mini projects.

Members **AGREED** that the Orchard Centre signal boost should be treated as the highest priority and supported both BTC and CBC officers in progressing other projects, such as noticeboards and planters, subject to available funds.

It was further **AGREED** that a progress update would be provided at the January meeting.

f. **Non-Electric Vehicles Obstructing EV Charging Bays at The Baulk, Biggleswade**

Members **RESOLVED** to allow Ward councillors to liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council and resolve the issues raised.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Committee **AGREED** that the January agenda would include the following items:

- Call for sites update
- S106 progress update
- Market Square Vision report
- Martyn's Law report
- Sustainable A1 Crossing Option – A1 Underpass
- Land East update
- BLMK ICB attendance

An update on anti-social behaviour was previously requested for a future meeting. It was noted that this matter will be presented to the Town Council in December 2025 and can be considered at that time.

11. Current and Upcoming Consultations

The Committee **NOTED** the current consultations.

12. EXEMPT

- a. Salamanca Group
- b. Co-option process
- c. Exempt Minutes of the Joint Committee Meeting 24th July 2025

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the **Thursday 15th January 2026** and will take place at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council at 7pm.

Meeting Closed at 9:00pm.