

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE HELD AT 09.30 ON WEDNESDAY
26 SEPTEMBER 2012 AT CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL OFFICES, PRIORY HOUSE, MONKS WALK,
CHICKSANDS, SHEFFORD**

Present:	Cllr M Jones	Deputy Leader CBC
	Cllr Mrs J Lawrence	Cllr CBC
	Cllr D Lawrence	Cllr CBC
	Cllr G Wilson	Cllr BTC
	Cllr Mrs H Ramsay	Cllr BTC
	Cllr Mrs W Smith	Cllr BTC
	Cllr Mrs M Russell	Cllr BTC
	Mr M Thomas	Biggleswade Chamber of Trade
	Mr G Lawrence	Town Plan Steering Group
	Mr R McGregor	Biggleswade Town Clerk
	Mr S Caldbeck	Major Projects Officer CBC
	Mr D Bowie	Head of Service – Traffic Management
	Mr J Woods	Countryside Team
	Ms C Romans	Project Officer Access Development CBC
	Mr C Andrews	Green Infrastructure Team Leader BRCC

Meeting stood for One Minute silence for Peter Vickers

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr T Woodward

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any interests and their nature in relation to any Personal interests on the agenda and any Personal and Prejudicial interests in any agenda item.

- a) Cllr I Bond declared a personal interest in item 16 as listed on the agenda.
- b) There were no prejudicial interests declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 4th July 2012 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

5. ELECTION OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Mr McGregor put forward a response from Mr Paul Jaggard, Chairman of the Industrial Park Group, to be a co-opted member.

RESOLVED to appoint Mr P Jaggard Chairman of the Industrial Park Group as co-opted member for the municipal year 2012/13.

6. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman introduced Officers from the CBC Countryside Team:

Mr Jonathan Woods
Mr Cliff Andrews
Ms Caroline Romans

7. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Chairman suggested quarterly meetings from today (26.09.12)

The Chairman will liaise with Mr McGregor, BTC, to set up dates. It was agreed that meetings will commence at 09.30 and be held at Priory House, Chicksands.

It was **agreed** that dates will be circulated to the Committee by the Chairman.

8. HITCHIN STREET IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Sam Caldbeck gave an update on the Hitchin Street Improvement Scheme.

A press release will be issued next week to bring the scheme to the attention of the public and the trading environment.

Mr M Thomas, BTC, gave an update on a recent meeting with Traders. Mr M Thomas discussed funds that had been raised by the Chamber of Trade and the possible use of the funds to introduce planters to the Hitchin Street Scheme.

The issue of seating was also raised, Cllr M Russell asked for the reuse of existing street furniture.

It was **agreed** that Sam Caldbeck and Martin Thomas meet on site to look at the viability of these suggestions. Sam Caldbeck to also look at a satisfactory electricity supply.

9. BIGGLESWADE ROUNDABOUTS

Sam Caldbeck gave an update on the Biggleswade Roundabouts.

Concern was expressed that Biggleswade would be isolated while this work is taking place. The Chairman assured the members that this would be taken into consideration in the planning of the work, and that Biggleswade would not be isolated.

Cllr M Russell expressed concern that Sun Street was becoming an unofficial one-way due to the parking situation beside Preen Furniture Bank. The Chairman asked Sam to take these comments into consideration.

Questions were raised as to the timescale and starting date. The Chairman advised that complicated and complex negotiations were on going. The Section agreements have not yet been agreed.

Members asked if any figures were available. Sam is in possession of estimates, and agreed to circulate these, together with any other information, to the members by email.

Cllr H Ramsay suggested a temporary roundabout system in Shortmead Street to test out the viability of a design.

Sam agreed to take this up at his forthcoming meeting with Amey, and will report back.

10. TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

Sam Caldbeck gave an update on the proposed Transport Interchange.

This is a flagship project and some monies have been allocated for designs to take forward for approval.

Mr M Thomas felt that the Transport Interchange is key and needs to be in place before the proposed retail park becomes operational.

Questions were asked about the initial phase 1.

Sam has received rough estimates and so far has artist impressions, but not actual drawings.

Cllr D Lawrence asked if CBC were in a position to bid for possible funding. The Chairman assured Cllr D Lawrence that CBC can adapt quickly.

Cllr M Russell felt that the Transport Interchange and Biggleswade Car Parking must be addressed well before the Retail Park is in place.

The Chairman stated that this cannot be discussed until the roundabout situation is sorted.

It was **agreed** that Sam Caldbeck would look at producing a basic design for the Transport Interchange.

9. BIGGLESWADE CAR PARKING

The proposed parking strategy will go before CBC Executive on the 2nd October 2012, this will be followed by working parties being set up to plan the implementation of the parking strategy.

Cllr J Lawrence pointed out that there are some serious errors in the plan and until these are rectified it will be difficult to proceed.

Cllr J Lawrence requested that consultation take place with the Town Clerk.

The Chairman stated that any errors in the Executive Paper should be dealt with, and asked that Officers preparing these documents please contact the Town Clerk.

Mr D Bowie gave an overview of the current parking situation and the short, medium and long term strategies.

Members agreed that permit bays must be looked at and more parking be made available.

Members **agreed** that a joint CBC/Town Council meeting should be held to discuss car parking in the Town.

The Chairman asked members if they would agree to bring forward Biggleswade Green Wheel in order that officer's time is not taken up.

Members agreed.

10. BIGGLESWADE GREEN WHEEL

Members received a report on the Biggleswade Green Wheel from Mr Jonathan Woods.

Mr Woods summarised the Green space Master plan 2012. It is proposed that the Plan will go out to Consultation 22-29 October 2012.

In order to get direct public feedback Biggleswade Library has been booked for this purpose. With BTC and BRCC working together, we will then have a document to take forward. This will enable the results to be brought back to the next meeting of the Biggleswade Joint Committee.

Cllr J Lawrence requested that amendments be made to the document where constant reference is made to Kings Reach.

Cllr J Lawrence asked members to consider Stakeholders for the wind farm for possible funding.

Cllr G Wilson expressed concern over the 100 trees that had been planted and destroyed by travellers at Pocket Park, and the fact that £5K has been set aside for a new gate. He felt that this would spoil the character of the park and asked that this money be better used for maintenance.

Cllr M Russell also raised concerns at inherent problems of the uneven surface of the current cycle routes and footpaths, and the fact that the use of heavy duty machinery along these footpaths was destabilizing river banks.

Mr J Woods will take up the issue of heavy machinery, together with the other concerns expressed by the members, with the Environment Agency and will respond to Cllr M Russell on this.

Cllr D Lawrence queried the position on the Rights of Way. Mr J Woods stated that we are working with volunteers in order to look at ways in which the rights of way could be enhanced.

Cllr M Russell asked for clarification of our position on volunteer liabilities. Mr Woods said that advice would be available on this as the HR people are currently investigating.

Mr C Andrews said that we are looking to engage with the local community for tree planting, volunteer litter picking, and general care of the town and also trying to revive the P3 Group.

It was **agreed** to hold a meeting with BTC to take forward the suggestion of resurrecting the P3 Group and that the Green Wheel document should go forward to consultation.

10. IVEL MEDICAL CENTRE

The concerns raised by Biggleswade Joint Committee were taken to Central Bedfordshire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board by Cllr Mrs P E Turner MBE.

Members were informed that Biggleswade Hospital is not closing and a Community Beds Review is going to be undertaken. Step up step down units will also be looked at and this item will go to the next Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 22nd October.

Members **agreed** that the Chairman will speak to the Director of Public Health and invite her to the next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting. NHS Commissioners will also be invited.

Cllr M Russell asked for the Biggleswade Health Centre to be included on the next Agenda.

11 RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Concerns were raised at the Biggleswade Town Council regarding the amount of retrospective Planning Applications which are coming before the Town Council and how these can be dealt with.

Members **agreed** that the Chairman will raise this with the Portfolio Holder, and will invite the Portfolio Holder and Senior Planning Officer to the next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting. This item is to be included on the next Agenda.

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved under section under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the consideration of the item are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

.....
Chairman of the Committee

13. CBC REPORTS IN EXEMPT SESSION

13.1 Car Parking at Aldi and Rose Lane

13.1.1 Aldi

Members discussed the covenants on the Aldi car park to the North of Bonds Lane

The Chairman gave an update on the Castle Keep covenant and agreed to circulate CBC's legal advice.

Mr M Thomas having taken his own legal advice, contended that under the circumstances the Castle Keep covenant will have reverted back to the Council and therefore Council should enforce.

The Chairman reiterated CBC's legal advice and requested Mr Thomas to provide documentary evidence to show that the covenant had indeed reverted back to the Council.

Members agreed that Mr M Thomas would endeavour to provide documentary evidence to the Chairman.

13.1.2 Rose Lane

Members discussed if there was any progress on the negotiations for Rose Lane Car Park.

Sam Caldbeck informed members that there has been no progress on the negotiations.

Members raised the issue of Compulsory purchase.

The Chairman stated that at the moment there is no valid reason for a CPO.

The Chair asked that communication be put in place to enquire about the terms of extending the lease, which he felt would then bring the matter to a head.

Mr McGregor stated that this should be done in consultation with a solicitor.

Members **agreed** that this item be placed on the next Agenda.