



BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2019

AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT

- Cllr S Watkins (Chairman)
- Cllr H Ramsay, BTC
- Cllr F Foster, BTC
- Cllr M Foster, CBC
- Cllr I Bond, CBC
- Cllr M North, BTC (Item 1-11)
- Cllr M Russell, BTC
- Mr R McGregor, BTC Town Clerk
- Mr S Newton, BTC TCOM
- Paul Middleton, CBC Highways Asset Manager
- Nishil Parmar, CBC Senior Project Manager
- Patricia Coker, CBC Head of Partnerships and Performance
- Adrian Hardy, CBC Public Transport Manager (Item 7 onwards)
- Stephen Mooring, CBC Head of Place Delivery (Item 1-12)
- Susan Childerhouse, CBC Head of Public Protection
- Sarah Hughes, CBC Community Engagement Manager (Item 1-12)
- Miss H Calvert, Administrator

Other Councillors Attending: Cllr Knight, BTC

1. APOLOGIES

Ingrid Hooley, Programme Enabling Manager, Graham Jones (Biggleswade Chamber of Trade), Philip Truppin, BTC Locum Clerk

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

To receive from members any declarations and the nature in relation to:

- (a) Disposable Pecuniary interest in any agenda item – None
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr Russell, in items relating to Stratton Upper School.

3. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Members received the Minutes of the BJC Meeting held on 11 July 2019.

The following alterations were agreed:

- To alter Item 9, from 'Bonds Lane' to 'Rose Lane'.
- To include the job titles of those who attended the meeting.
- To include Cllr Whitaker on the list of apologies.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the BJC Meeting held on 11 July 2019.

Cllr Russell updated members on the Neighbourhood Planning Workshop. Members were informed that the Workshop did not take place on the 17th July 2019 due to staff sickness. The workshop was rescheduled and took place on the 18th September 2019. The Workshop invitation was sent to those who completed the Public Survey and registered an interest in helping to develop the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Russell agreed to circulate the presentation from the Neighbourhood Planning Workshop with Biggleswade Joint Committee members.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of public

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

There were no announcements or communications from the Chairman.

7. HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Members received an update from Patricia Coker, Head of Partnerships and Performance at CBC.

Members were informed that a strategic case document has been completed for providing a Health and Social Care Hub in Biggleswade. It was agreed for the health hub to be situated on the Biggleswade Hospital site. It was hoped that this service would help to reduce the footfall at Lister Hospital.

It was noted that the Hospital site is owned by the NHS. CBC have been in negotiations with the NHS, and a lease agreement, in principle, has been reached. The terms of the lease have not yet been agreed.

The Saffron Road Medical Centre and the CBC Social Services Department in London Road are both keen on relocating to the hub. The Ivel Medical Centre is open to discussing a possible relocation.

Members thanked Patricia Coker for the update and the work being undertaken. Members expressed appreciation on the unique challenges being faced.

8. COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEMES

Members received information on the Central Bedfordshire Council Community Grant Schemes by Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager at CBC.

It was noted that there are three types of grant schemes that will be introduced: Ward Councillor Community Grants, Community Asset Grants and Public Realm Grants.

The overarching purpose of these grants is to help the community.

The following was noted:

- The Ward Councillor Community Grant can be used to improve community facilities that will benefit residents.
- The Director of Resources at CBC will be responsible for making the final decision on approving Community Asset Grants.
- A number of authorities across the country already have similar schemes in place.
- There will be bidding dates for submitting Community Asset grants. The first round of bidding will open in December this year and be open for two-three months.

Members thanked Sarah Hughes for the informative presentation.

9. HIGHWAYS

Members received an update on Local Schemes by Nishil Parmar, CBC Principle Highways Officer:

Eagle Farm Road: Buildout and Safe crossing facility for school children to access the Stratton Upper School.

From the Traffic Management meeting on 17th September 2019 the application made by residents of Eagle Farm Road can be considered as a petition. The likely outcome is that a road marking scheme will be investigated for the entire length of Eagle Farm Road and the construction works to be undertaken in conjunction.

It was noted by Cllr M Russell that Trustees of Stratton School are not happy with a buildout in the school bus turning area, as proposed.

Members requested that Mr Parmar seek clarity on the scheme and report back to the group via email in advance of the Traffic Management Meeting on 5th November 2019.

Orchard Close: Footway buildout and two uncontrolled crossings at the junction with Hitchmead Road.

This scheme is currently in Outline design and a Detailed design is to begin in early 2020. There are discussions with the School and Central Bedfordshire Council's legal team over the land take to ensure full desirable footway width. The proposal is to take a small piece of land from Stratton School's playing field and the Stratton Trustees are content with this.

Cllr Whitaker suggested that this would also be a good opportunity to address concerns over speed on Hitchmead road. It was agreed that it would be better to reduce the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph.

High Street: Provide a controlled crossing at the High St which will link with the cycle network.

It was noted that the consultation is to start early in 2020.

Havelock Rd: To provide safe crossing facilities at the junction with Potton Road. The works includes three uncontrolled crossings.

The scheme was approved in TMM on 17th September 2019.

Lawrence Road: To provide safe crossing facilities for school children at the junction with Auckland Road and enhance the junction.

Outline Design completed. Consultation to start in September and be presented at TMM on 5th November. Discussions have been made with Cllrs and residents on site visits. Schools have been contacted however no response yet possibly due to school holidays.

Potton Road: Controlled pedestrian crossing to provide a safe crossing for school children. Crossings link with the Shamrock & Silvermead access link to Edward Peake Middle School.

Outline Design in progress. Consultation to start in February/March 2020.

It was noted that residents feel strongly that a pedestrian crossing should be built. It was noted that there will be a controlled crossing and a school crossing.

Crab Lane: Several new and upgraded uncontrolled crossings to be installed to improve safety within the area of the junctions with Chestnut Avenue and Lawrence Road.

Detailed design in progress and a number of surveys undertaken on pedestrian desire lines and traffic speeds. The consultation is to start in February/March 2020.

The Baulk: Introduction of a one-way with contraflow cycle way.

The construction work is to be completed by 1st November. Additional underground utilities found during construction have led to solutions such as solar illuminated signage which have a lead in time for units. Also, a one-way sign is to be installed upon entry to the one-way vehicular section.

Members received an update from Paul Middleton, CBC Highways Asset Manager. The following was noted:

- Road re-surfacing will be undertaken on or around 16th/17th October on Winston Crescent and Furzenhall roads.

- Surface Dressing Pre-Patching will commence in November on Dunton Lane. There are also roads in Edworth and Sutton to be rectified.
- There have been issues with the streetlights on Fairfield Road. There are two columns outstanding to be reconnected. CBC are in constant dialogue with UKPN to get this resolved.
- Ongoing dialogue with developers for CBC to adopt streetlights at Kings Reach.
- Gazeley site on Stratton business is having its snagging completed to ensure that it meets the standards if CBC were to adopt.
- Traffic Signal Design to be replaced at London Road/Kitelands, High Street/Hitchin Road, and High Street/Abbots Walk.
- Highway Data Analysis is ongoing for the development of the annual and 5-year plan.

10. GROWTH AND REGENERATION

Members received an update from Stephen Mooring on the Highways Infrastructure Fund.

Stephen provided members with the key figures, the different phases of the work, and the next steps.

Members thanked Stephen for this update.

11. STRATTON BUSINESS PARK

Members received an update from Stephen Mooring.

Stephen welcomed comments on Stratton Business Park. It was noted that there is scope for expansion at the park.

Members questioned the current policy for managing the Business Park. Stephen confirmed that he will inform the Town Council on any updates.

Members felt that the signage needs to be looked into as it not particularly clear.

It was noted that there is currently an issue with littering at the McDonalds site. Members questioned who is responsible for taking this forward.

12. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

Members received an update from Stephen Mooring.

It was noted that the Town Clerk attended a meeting on the Town Centre Benchmarking Study Findings. This meeting was attended by all Town Clerks within Central Bedfordshire.

Stephen confirmed that he would check on the timescales for submitting a bid and report back to the group.

Members thanked Stephen for this update.

13. CHANGES to BUS SERVICES

Members considered the forthcoming bus changes to services in Biggleswade.

Cllr Watkins read out a response from CBC regarding the reasons for these changes.

The following was noted:

- CBC currently spend more than £1m each year funding bus services that are not commercially viable for bus operators to run due to low passenger numbers.
- CBC completed an evaluation of the use of bus services. The figures show that between 1st May and 31st August, the five journeys on the 85 and 85A routes scheduled to depart between 06.00 & 08.00 carried a total of 2,350 passengers. There were 85 Mondays to Fridays during this period so an average of 27.6 passengers per day travelled on journeys running between these times: there are five departures between these times so an average of around 5.5 passengers travelled per journey. In the early evenings, a total of 299 passengers travelled on the four journeys timetabled to depart between 18.30 and 20.09 (the last departure). The early evening average number of passengers is therefore 3.5 per day, or 0.87 across the four journeys.
- Lastly, it is not accurate to say that the Council has cut its funding to the 85/85A Biggleswade town service which has previously been supported from developer funding from the Kings Reach and Potton Road developments. This funding has now come to an end.

Members accepted that the bus service is currently not being used by many residents. It was noted that the bus service changes contradict the residential developments being built in Biggleswade which offer little to no parking.

Members expressed disappointment that the Town Council was not given adequate notice of these changes. Members requested that the Town Council are notified well in advance of any future changes to the bus services.

14. BIGGLESWADE SKATE PARK

Members received an update from Cllr Watkins.

A successful design and process consultation meeting took place on 17th September involving various Councillors, the Town Clerk, and colleagues at Maverick Industries.

There will be a Community Engagement event for the new Skate Park. This event will be split into two, addressing any issues that concerned neighbours may have, and informing those who wish to use the facility of the progress and design.

15. BIGGLESWADE SPLASH PARK

Members received an update from Cllr Watkins.

Members were informed that work is in progress to find an appropriate site on the edge of town for the Splash Park.

It was noted that there are hopes to also build an adventure playground, alongside the Splash Park, in the future.

It was noted that securing a piece of land for this Splash Park would take some time.

16. BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members noted the work plan.

17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items.

Date of the next meeting: 21st November 2019, 10am-12noon, Chicksands.