

BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE
MEETING TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2016 – 10.00am IN ROOM 15
AT CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
PRIORY HOUSE, MONKS WALK, CHICKSANDS, SHEFFORD SG175TQ

PRESENT:

Cllr M Jones	Deputy Leader CBC (Chair)
Cllr D Albone	BTC
Cllr B Briars	BTC
Cllr D Lawrence	CBC
Cllr Mrs J Lawrence	CBC
Mr P Fraser	CBC Head of Partnerships, CEYS
Cllr Mrs M Russell	BTC
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay	BTC
Mr M Thomas	Biggleswade Chamber of Trade
Mr M Thorn	Deputy Town Clerk, BTC

Mrs J Durn Administrator, BTC

Also Present:

Mr P Mason	CBC
Mr S Lakin	CBC For Item 7
Mr D Leverington	CBC For Item 8
Mr S Caldbeck	CBC For Item 9
Ms P Coker	CBC For Item 10

Cllr D Strachan Member of Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Foster, Cllr T Woodward

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Before receiving any declarations, the Chairman clarified the meaning of pecuniary interest. Following which Members were asked to make any declarations and the nature in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item: Cllr D Albone, Item 6: Routing the B1040.

3. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The following questions were received from Members on items not already included on the Agenda.

- 3.1 Question from Cllr Briars: BTC would like confirmation that the Potton Road Crossing will be a Pelican crossing as requested by BTC. A Pelican is necessary standard of crossing because of the proximity to the school. The pinch point is a

hazard, and is creating severely dangerous problems of safety with children crossing from the school. Is it possible for this dangerous pinch point to be removed?

ACTION: The Chairman asked Mr Mason to look at this issue and he will then report back to BTC.

3.2 Question from Mr M Thomas: Future commercial viability of the Town Centre.

The Chairman asked that this item be taken later in the Agenda. (Item 7)

3.3 Question from Cllr Mrs J Lawrence: Car Parking at the Retail Park seems inadequate, with cars backing onto the A1 waiting to come into the Retail Park. Is the car parking sufficient with people coming from surrounding areas such as Letchworth, etc. What about staff parking. 800 spaces are not sufficient. A lot of these spaces are taken up all day by staff from the shops. The car park is half full before customers arrive.

Paul Mason said that he understood from M&S Travel Team that they have a travel plan in operation for their staff, which should alleviate some of the parking.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the promised shuttle bus is not yet in operation.

The Chairman felt that a wider discussion needs to be taken between the Town Council and the relevant authorities at the Retail Park. Mr M Thomas said that the Chamber of Trade understands this issue is due for review by the Retail Park at the end of January 2017.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members received and approved the Minutes of the BJC held on 20 July 2016.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the minutes of the BJC held on 20 July 2016.

Cllr D Lawrence is still looking for a definitive map showing what is approved and not approved. This is being addressed by Sam Caldbeck.

Cllr B Briars – On-Street Parking. The Chairman will cover this in item 6, and Hitchin Street will be covered under Transport Interchange, item 7.

6. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- Bridge Repairs: 26/27 November is the next possession. An overnight closure notice has been issued (from 2am to early morning). The remainder of the work to be done will be track-side and will not require traffic management. This should be the last one, apart from removal of the temporary barriers.

- Routing the B1040: Road not officially adopted. Until this happens CBC cannot reclassify the road. There are works due for the next financial year (by the end of March next year 2017) CBC should then be able to adopt the road and work can then begin on reclassification.
- Cllr Mrs M Russell said that signage is still pointing people in the wrong direction (into Drove Road)

The Chairman reported that CBC did take the issue of signage up with the Enforcement team; but unfortunately, until satnavs are updated, this is still happening. The Chairman asked Paul Mason if anything further could be done temporarily. Paul said that the work is on-going to correct the signage. However, we may be able to do something as a temporary measure and he will look into this. **ACTION:** Paul Mason

- Commuter Parking: All design work has been completed and work will carry on during the next few months, weather permitting and completion is expected by the end of March 2017.

7. TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE (Including Hitchin Street)

CBC Officer attending - Steve Lakin

Steve Lakin circulated a plan and gave an overview of the work taken place on this project over the last 18 months by CBC. This included proposed changes to the bus station, and reversing the flow at Hitchin Street and Bonds Lane, as well as the Market Square. Plans to be put forward include:

- Hitchin Street – reconfigure top junction traffic lights
- Reverse flow on Hitchin Street
- Provide bus stop on the High Street itself (using existing parking bay)
- Drop-off stop on the other side of the High Street
- Expand bus stop capacity at the top of Station Road
- Re-define space at the top of Hitchin Street to allow closing the loop at the other side of Century House.
- Palace Street/Station Road junction changes.

Members raised several points of concern, particularly regarding parking, the one-way system, and repairs to Hitchin Street, Century House, bus services, and the commercial viability of the town. Following in-depth discussion, it was agreed to call an additional Meeting of the BJC in order to address these items in more detail, and explore other possible opportunities for improvement.

8. COUNTRYSIDE FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE

CBC Officer attending - David Leverington

Mr Leverington reported that there have been some issues of concern raised by a member of the public, which are currently being addressed. The verges are

scheduled to be cut annually in May/June and are just about to receive the final cut for the year. The path is also scheduled for repair.

CBC have suffered with contractor difficulties early this year, and as a result had to bring in a second contractor, thus delaying the work. This has now been rectified.

Cllr D Albone reported that BTC had received plans for planting on the new development, and have noted that the footpath appears to have been removed.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked for an overall footpath plan as the Green Wheel will be discussed on a future Agenda. It was noted that although this issue had initially come from a Planning Application, the Biggleswade Joint committee should be able to highlight priorities for S106 monies.

The Chairman agreed that as this is not strictly planning, which is excluded from this Committee, he will be able to take up the issue of the footpath with the Planning Department.

ACTION: The Chairman will take up the footpath issue with planning.

9. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF THE TOWN CENTRE

CBC Officer attending - Sam Caldbeck

Mr Caldbeck gave a presentation covering a strategic overview of Biggleswade Town Centre.

The main points were:

- Focus
- Core Projects in Biggleswade
- Derelict sites
- Market Square
- Century House

CBC is also looking at other opportunities for:

- Activities and partnerships:
- Market and event development
- Market improvements – charter/specialist
- Business improvement district viability

Once CBC have explored all options, a Business Plan will be put forward.

Members expressed concern regarding derelict sites, and requested that 215 notices be issued.

Mr Caldbeck explained that CBC have put £1m into the shop front scheme and one bidding round has taken place, and there are two others to follow.

Mr Thomas has spoken to a Commercial Director colleague, Mr John Lewis, regarding the current situation in Biggleswade, and is happy to share his thoughts and recommendations with both CBC and BTC.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked if Mr Thomas could provide a report on his meeting with Mr Lewis and present it at the January meeting. She also recently attended a Conference on revitalising town centres in the computer age which contained valuable information which could be shared.

ACTION: In view of these comments, the Chairman suggested that a separate meeting be convened to include BTC, CBC and Mr Thomas, in order to put forward ideas and address all valid points and concerns, therefore allowing the two Councils to work together on this project.

Mr Thomas will provide a report from his meeting with Mr Lewis, and Cllr Mrs M Russell will provide a report covering information from the Conference.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence queried the housing numbers as she felt these figures were under-estimated.

Cllr D Lawrence noted that the map provide by Mr Caldbeck does not show what is approved. There is also no information available regarding S106 money.

ACTION: Mr Caldbeck will provide this information at the next meeting.

10. BRIEFING ON THE INTEGRATED HEALTH AND CARE HUB

Presentation by Patricia Coker

A review of Milton Keynes and Bedford Hospitals is currently taking place. Ms Coker took the meeting through CBC vision for integration. This is a proposal for Biggleswade Hospital to become a Health Hub for Biggleswade and the surrounding area. Biggleswade is in the Ivel Valley quadrant.

The key points are:

- Providing a local point for services.
- Joint working with both the Lister and Bedford Hospitals.
- Hub to be used as a step up, step down facility providing services across the board. For example, saving elderly people from staying in hospital by offering them an intermediary care home facility – out of hospital care - prior to returning home, plus Clinics and all other out of hospital care.
- It is not just for the elderly. Mental health and CAMH children's services also covered.
- £3.13m Funding has been received from NHS England

CBC is very keen to develop this project. Funding comes with a requirement to deliver by 2020. and a full outline business case will have to be produced.

The Chairman and Members thanked Ms Coker for a very informative presentation.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

15 minutes for members of the public to make statements.

Member of public, Cllr D Strachan, felt that there needs to be far better communication between Councils.

Meeting closed at 1.00pm.

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Approved