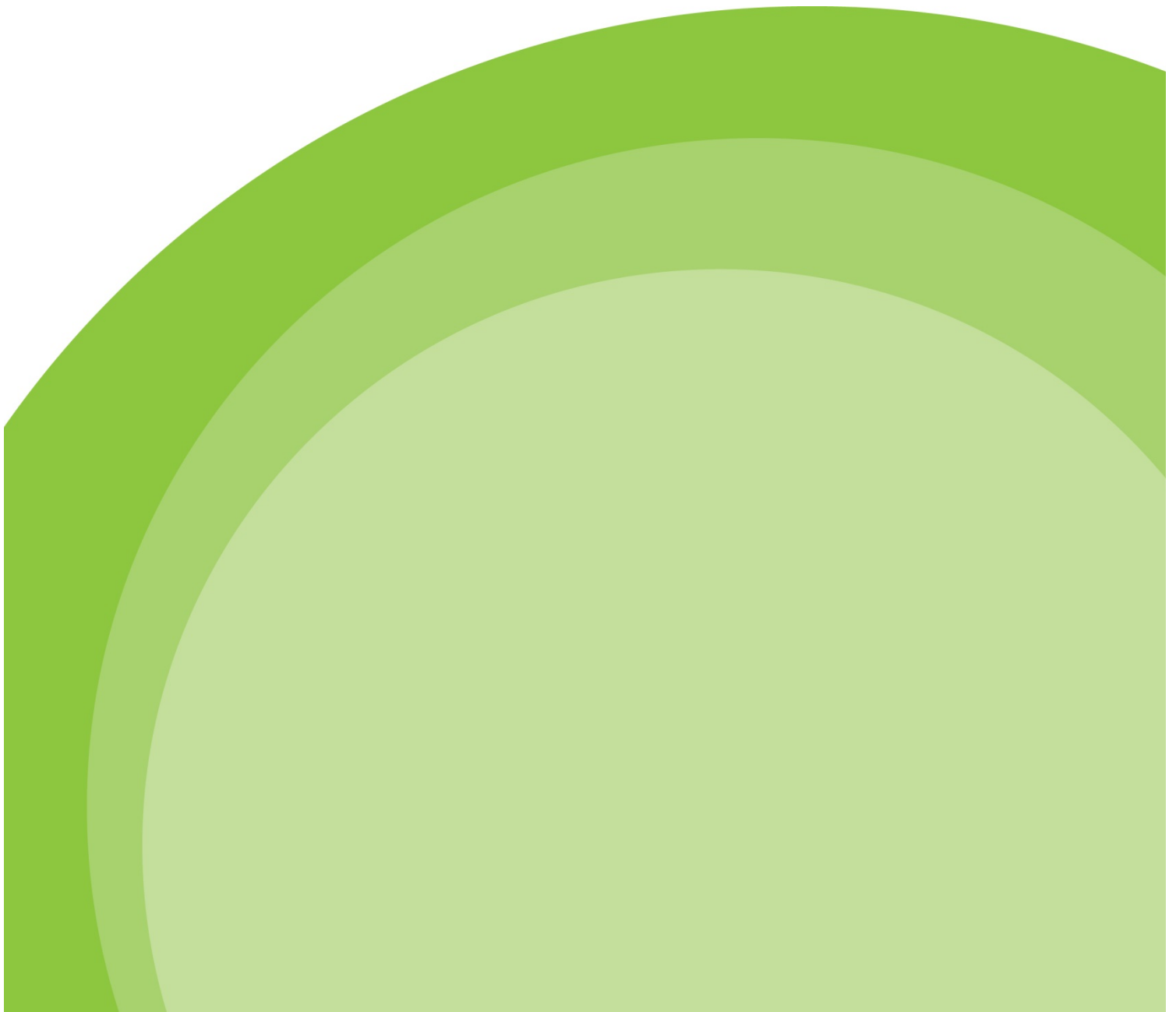




# Annual summary of Outside Bodies

01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017



# Outside Bodies (2016/17)

**A summary of the activity of some of those outside bodies to which CBC Members have been appointed for the municipal year 2016/17.**

## Introduction

The Council appoints its Members to a wide variety of organisations, ranging from statutory organisations to grant-making charities and from local government assemblies/joint bodies to very local community-based projects. In some cases Member participation is crucial to supporting the delivery of Council priorities and in others it fosters community engagement at ward level that may help raise Central Bedfordshire Council's profile in the community. Some of these bodies are strategic in nature, whilst others are more general or ward-based.

In June 2016 the Council agreed the need for a mechanism for appointees on strategic outside bodies to report back to the Council on significant matters. Whilst some bodies already report verbally at meetings such as Council and Executive it was felt the producing an update on the work of the bodies would help to enhance the sharing of information and to promote transparency to residents and other Members. The following strategic bodies report on a periodic basis to Full Council, Executive or Audit and are not therefore included in this report:-

- Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority
- Bedfordshire Police & Crime Panel
- Bedford Borough Council Pensions Committee

This report does not seek to provide an update on all of the outside bodies but focuses specifically on the strategic outside bodies.

So as not to unduly add pressure on appointees a simple annual mechanism of annual reporting was agreed at a time convenient to meetings of those bodies taking place.

Feedback is provided by a relevant appointee to the body, not the body itself and all feedback received is published on the Council's website.

Appointees are asked to provide a brief summary of the key issues, discussions or decisions taken over the last 12 months and a summary of key issues or decisions anticipated over the next 12 months for each outside body.

Whilst they would not normally be included in this report several Members have provided updates on non-strategic outside bodies. These have been included at Appendix A.

For the period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 the following updates have been provided for strategic outside bodies, the views provided are those of a representative appointed to these outside body and do not necessarily represent the views of all appointed representatives or the Council as a whole:-

Outside body	Representative(s) for 2016/17
<p>Beds &amp; River Ivel IDB</p> <p>The Board consists of twenty one Members each with equal voting rights; four of those Member being nominated from Central Bedfordshire Council, and five from Bedford Borough Council. Each Council contributing £300,294.00 and £533,482.00 respectively</p> <p>The main purpose of the Board is to ensure that all minor rivers and waterways are maintained with an aim to eliminate the possibility of flooding occurring. It has no responsibility for the main rivers – Great Ouse, Ivel etc, - that responsibility resides with the Environment Agency. The main Central Bedfordshire issues for this year as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pix Brook Standalone Farm Reservoir. Following the heavy thunderstorms in June 2016, Stotfold experienced significant flooding in particular Coppice Mead &amp; Brooke Street. The Board has appointed consultants to undertake a study at the Pix Brook Standalone Farm reservoir. An option is to increase the size of the reservoir, however increase storage could increase the flood risk. There is on going dialogue with CBC and Hert CC</li> <li>2. Sick Leave &amp; Low Productivity Low productivity, along with an increase in workforce sickness has resulted in a backlog of work. The Board will continue to monitor the sick leave. The heavy rains earlier in the year had curtailed the work programme, however some 85% of the 2016/17 programme has been completed. Consideration was given for a greater use of Contractors, however the policy of employing a direct labour force would be kept.</li> </ol>	<p>Cllrs Spurr, Brown, Firth, Birt &amp; Dixon</p>
<p>Chilterns AONB Conservation Board</p> <p>The representative has only recently been appointed to this Board, the main issue to date is how they quantify what they do for CBC. For the money that we contribute to this Board we gain far more value from having a national park on our territory.</p>	<p>Cllr Janes</p>
<p>County Council Network</p> <p>A full report of the work of the Assembly has been circulated separately.</p>	<p>Cllrs Jamieson, Jones, Versallion &amp; Zerny</p>
<p>East Anglia Reserve Forces &amp; Cadets Association</p> <p>The key issues discussed this year relate to the reduction in Ministry of Defence (MOD) civil servants, an increase in the cost of equipment because of the exchange rate and the presence of a tough recruiting environment.</p> <p>Army 2020, the transformation of the British Army for the 2020s and beyond, in response to the strategic challenges it is likely to face in the future was published in December 2016 that includes a reduction in the defence estate by 30% over next 20 years and a £55k</p>	<p>Cllrs Chapman, Costin &amp; Versallion</p>

Outside body	Representative(s) for 2016/17
<p>housing target for the MOD.</p> <p>The recruitment of young cadets was progressing well but it was a struggle to recruit adults to run the units.</p>	
<p>LGA General Assembly</p> <p>A full report of the work of the Assembly has been circulated separately.</p>	<p>Cllrs Jamieson, Jones &amp; Wenham</p>

**Contact Officer:-**

Jonathon Partridge, Head of Governance Services (0300 300 4634)

# Appendix A

Other non-strategic groups where an update has been provided:-

## **Barton Educational Trust (Cllr Ian Shingler)**

The Trust has met 3 times in the past year. We have had a successful year with a better return on our investments. We have used these funds, together with our agricultural rent to fund grants to local university and college students, schools and the scouts.

## **Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park Update (Cllr Sue Clark)**

The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park is at the heart of the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford corridor. The Trust submitted evidence to the National Infrastructure Commission in August 2016 and met with its advisers in January 2017. Key arguments centre around not only the economic and environmental benefits that the Waterway Park can bring to the sub region, but also its role in place making. The Trust will be responding to the latest consultation on strategic planning and governance and continue to seek to influence the NIC study to recognise the Waterway Park as key green/blue infrastructure with an important role to play in supporting housing and economic growth and therefore warranting an outline business case. The Trust has placed its own target to produce a business case on hold anticipating that, if the case for the Waterway Park as strategic infrastructure is successful, this task could form part of the work required to develop a broader strategic plan for this section of the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford corridor. The Trust is keeping sufficient funding for a business case in its budget should it become necessary to it to lead this work.

The Trust's Programme Manager has produced a High Level Timeline for the delivery of the Waterway by 2030. The Trust has contracted a consultant from Land and Water, a major contractor with the Canal and River Trust and the Environment Agency, to update the overall project costs with the overall construction costs now being estimated at circa £150m. The next stage will be to evaluate commercial opportunities along the route and estimate the extent to which the project might be self-financing.

In the last 6 months Trust directors have met with most local MPs, made presentations to the Environment Agency and the PIIDDG sub group of SEMLEP, met with representatives of the National Infrastructure Commission and agreed to make a presentation to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Waterways. There will be a further presentation to the main SEMLEP Board in July.

Contact with local stakeholders, particularly Consortium members, has been maintained as has liaison with a number of important land holding interests along the route.

To raise local awareness, the Trust and Consortium have agreed a strategy to mark the route of the Waterway through planting, way markers, footpaths, cycleways and ponds. As land for the Waterway Park is transferred to the local authorities via the planning process the overall aim is that sections are marked in a variety of ways.

The Trust has very recently secured an award of £8,300 from Central Bedfordshire's Planning Obligations Green Infrastructure Fund to support this initiative. The Trust will be working with the Forest of Marston Vale to install information boards, wooden sculptures, benches and marker posts along a small section of the route and will match the grant with a further 20% contribution. The total cost to mark the route through Central Bedfordshire in the same way, including upgrading existing footpaths and putting in permissive paths, is

estimated at around £600,000. The Trust is researching other sources of funding for which it can bid to help finance further sections. The Forest of Marston Vale is a key partner in the project. Parish Councils along the route have been contacted. Co-operation from some key landowners has been secured as well as support from Bedford Rural Communities Charity who have an interest in the section near the Tea Rooms at Ridgmont Station.

### **Other current projects**

- Campbell Park Marina. In Milton Keynes Crest Nicholson Regeneration has recently submitted a planning application for a mixed use 15 acre site at Campbell Park, alongside the Grand Union Canal. The site will include a 100 berth marina and will create the start of the Waterway in Milton Keynes city centre. The Trust has worked with the developers and the Canal and River Trust to ensure the development project delivers the right infrastructure to link with the Grand Union and meet the Waterway project's design parameters. If approved, the development will secure the first small section of the Waterway from the Grand Union Canal and signify a major step forward.
- Covanta Veolia. The Trust is working with Council officers to ensure the developers contribution of £3.5m towards works to secure the waterway route across cabling from the new plant is used effectively.
- Bedford Business Park. Bedford Borough Council has recently received a planning application for employment development at Bedford Business Park, a site it owns in the Marston Vale, north of the A421 and south of Wootton. The proposed development includes linear balancing ponds on the route of the Waterway and a road bridge across it thereby securing the route.
- Extending the Head of Navigation on the Great Ouse in Bedford. The Programme Manager has drawn up a detailed project plan to provide the basis for funding bids for the project. It involves extending the head of navigation upstream at Kempston by approximately three kilometres to Box End Water Park. This would provide the start point for the Waterway Park at Kempston and create new destinations for boats and other activities, including the B&MK Enterprises' boat The John Bunyan which is now the Trust's main source of funding. Dredging will be necessary, plus a new or raised footbridge, and probably a new lock at Kempston Weir. The Trust is currently leading on promoting this project but is working closely with the Environment Agency and Bedford Borough Council.

### **Bedfordshire Local Nature Partnership (Cllr Sue Clarke)**

The Bedfordshire LNP has had a busy and productive year during 2016-17, the first under new Chairman Professor Paul Leinster CBE. James Russell of the Forest of Marston Vale Trust was also elected as Vice-Chairman during the year. We also welcomed one new Board Member, Cllr Sue Clark of Central Bedfordshire Council. The Board has met quarterly throughout the year, supported by the Management Steering Group and Management Steering Group (MSG). The LNP is extremely grateful to SEMLEP for providing a venue and refreshments for the Board meetings.

The LNP produced its first significant publication "Bedfordshire's Natural Environment – Its value to us all", which performs the dual roles of introducing the LNP and raising its profile, and producing an overview of the natural environment of Bedfordshire – see:

<http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/downloads/lnp-publications/>

The LNP supported CBC in the development of its environmental policies as part of ongoing Local Plan consultations, with several Board and MSG members attending a workshop. The LNP has also responded to several other significant consultations,

including the A1 East of England Strategic Study and a consultation on the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway as well as the Luton and Bedford Local Plans. LNP Board and MSG members have also worked closely with Planning Teams in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils on updating and developing the methodology for incorporating 'green infrastructure planning' into Neighbourhood Plans.

Towards the end of the financial year the LNP submitted a bid to Defra for the development of a 'Natural Capital Investment Plan' for the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, and was successful in securing £25,000 towards this. The resulting 'NCIP' will provide a consistent approach to describing natural capital across the corridor, and identifying priorities for investment, focusing on the large-scale infrastructure being planned for the area. The project will also engage other LNPs, infrastructure providers and government agencies, highlighting the role of the Bedfordshire LNP in bringing this vision and partnership forward.

The excellent progress made by the LNP during this year would not have been possible without the financial support provided by the three local authorities.

### **Broom South Quarry Liaison Group (Cllr Caroline Maudlin)**

Cllr Maudlin has acted as the chair for the Broom South Quarry Liaison Group for the last couple years. The Liaison Group includes representatives of the parish councils of Northill, Southill, Old Warden, Langford and Shefford as well as the agent acting on behalf of the Shuttleworth Trust (the landowner), the operator (Tarmac) and the Council.

The Group meets regularly between two and four times a year. Its primary purpose is to discuss progress with the quarrying and restoration operations and whether there are any issues associated with these (such as dust monitoring or traffic movements or mud on the road). Also if there have been any complaints and if so how they have been dealt with and who has been affected. Parish members may also bring new matters to the attention of the group.

This Liaison Group has, additionally, been responsible for the operation of the community fund set up by Tarmac when planning permission was granted for the site. There was in excess of £60,000 in this fund and the group has been meeting up to four times a year to discuss applications from local community groups within the five parishes for funding towards specific local projects. The size of grant has ranged from a few hundred pounds to £8000. The nature of the projects gaining funding has been many and varied ranging from contributions towards new cricket practice nets, toys for playgroups, kit for a youth football team, playground equipment, church repairs, tables and chairs for a village hall, repairs to the windows of an almshouse and the Old Warden Priory project. Cllr Maudlin has been invaluable in impartially guiding parish members towards making decisions on the projects to fund and the extent of funding.

### **Citizens Advice, Dunstable (Cllr Carole Hegley)**

Thank you for the opportunity to present an update on the work done at CA, Dunstable for which I am a CBC representative as an outside body. The meetings tend to review operational progress, numbers of customers who visit the service and any associated pressures, new services introduced etc. Areas of service are also reviewed in terms of demand, capacity, trends, Government changes – particularly Welfare Reform which has evidenced as impact to residents in the area. Debt management, housing issues, benefit claims advice and help in completing what are perceived to be complex forms by individuals who are older people, have difficulty with language/English etc. There are

normally a number of reports presented covering quality standards, training, new services (Debt advice), update on number of volunteers, finance, customer visits, etc. and an opportunity to present an update from me as Central Beds. CA are also looking to consider a move of premises from the Town Council building to the new Leisure Centre when that is completed and any progress is reported on this to those present.

I have instigated a line of enquiry with the Housing Service regarding the number of residents seen at CA on housing issues compared to CBC Housing Service and questioned if there is duplication in the system – this is being investigated. They have also done some specific report work on local key issues including housing need, discrimination against disabled customers for taxis.

I see the CA as being the local independent source of information and advice to residents and certainly it is well used and in demand. Latterly they have increased hours of operation with the help of additional funding, so can see more residents, and have also enabled an on line Enquiry system for residents who find it difficult to access the bureau during working hours, this is proving successful and popular. The numbers of volunteers is healthy and recruitment for more continues to be 'business as usual' as some volunteers move on to employment opportunities. Volunteers are managed and trained in different areas for their expertise and quality checked. They are welcoming and appreciative of CBC funding and also explore other areas of fund raising including their own quiz nights and evening supper events. They do officially report into the Council via Peter Fraser.

#### **Link a ride community transport (Cllr P Duckett)**

A big issue this year has related to the CBC tender for community bus services. The specialist service they offer spells out how unique it is and not an ordinary bus service at all but an extension of social services provision. They have commissioned and leased a new bus and have a good fleet of specialist vehicles and are in a good position to service disadvantaged and vulnerable people across Central Bedfordshire's rural middle and east.

#### **Luton RIGHTS (Cllr Susan Goodchild)**

As a Trustee and a Member of the Management Committee of Luton Rights it has been an extremely challenging year for the organisation, mainly due to reduction of funding from London Luton Airport. The focus has been to continue to deliver the much needed service to both residents of Luton and some Central Bedfordshire residents, especially the Houghton Regis area. We have continued to work closely with the Luton Access partners to providing a seamless service to members of the public from the co-location and also providing community outreaches for those who are not able to access the services in the Town.

We will be delivering a project commissioned by Luton Borough Council to look at integration of third sector Adult Social Care services in Luton. During the year welfare benefits advice continues to be our largest demand closely followed by debt advice. During the year the amount of financial gains to Luton Rights' clients was over £4 million with over £2 million pounds of client debt deal with.





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