

Consultation Responses Received to date.

Consultee	Comments
Cllr Maurice Jones	<p>I've looked at your briefing and the one thing that stands out for me is the issue of funding. Whilst currently there are funds for the old SBDC towns this is by no means certain for the future. Please let me know how you would handle this situation?</p>
Cllr Tony Green	<p>Further to my email yesterday, I further noted last night, the proposal in paragraph 5.3, which completely flies in the face of the agreement of the DTCMC that there should be a Fully Constituted Town Centre Management Committee. We noted the informal approach taken by the former Mid Beds Towns, but recognised that the more formal approach taken by the towns in the South of the County had proved more successful. Is Cllr Matthews supposed to be representing all the elected representatives for all our Town Centres? This does not sound very democratic to me, especially as he is to be the chairman!</p>
Cllr Carole Hegley	<p>Thanks for your email and attachment which I have studied. However, as I am a member of the Executive and this report will be coming there I feel any comments made in the capacity of Ward member may prejudice my input at Executive and hence I will refrain from comments now and reserve my comments for the Executive.</p>
Cllr Stephen Male	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We should have a consistent approach to Town Centre Management - there should be no formal constitutional arrangements with regards to Town Centre Management Committees or other Town Centre related bodies. 2. Resources should be provided, where available, on a 'task and finish' basis for large programmes such as Town Centre Master planning. 3. If Town Councils wish to have a Town Centre Forum / Committee etc they should run, manage and fund general actions from within their own resources. <p>Summary of telephone conversation – points agreed by Cllr Male by email</p>
Cllr David Lawrence	<p>I believe in delegating authority cash and initiative to the lowest level and thus I would give for example ALL parking control both on and off street to the Town Councils I would have all market and market square facilities managed by the town council We however rejected a Town Centre Manager as it tied up too much risk in one person and therefore support your committee need - but isn't this already the elected Town Council?</p> <p>Some of your suggestions take a slightly big brother approach to Town Councils I believe that the Town policies should be dramatically different to Parish policies and that we should make Town Councils more responsible</p>

	<p>and give them appropriate support. The overhead of central control will exceed any imperfections in Town Councils.</p> <p>As a Town Councillor I can only say Give us the tools and we will finish the job !!!</p>
Cllr Susan Goodschild	<p>The current system has served Houghton Regis very well for the past few years. As you are undoubtedly aware we have our Master Plan which was drawn up after extensive consultation with the public, Town Council, South Bedfordshire District Council and Bedfordshire County Council. Community empowerment is high on the Government's agenda and any change in the current structure would I feel be a retrograde step.</p> <p>I fully support the fact that Town Centres are developed in a strategic, co-ordinated and well managed way, with clear and measurable outputs against targets and investment. However, my main concern is whether in the case of Houghton Regis, the Town Council have the capacity to deliver, bearing in mind that the area will be greatly affected by planned growth.</p>

Town Councils

Town Council	Response
Amphill	<p>Amphill Town Council cannot agree with what is being said in the briefing note as in the current economic climate things can quickly change. The Town Council would like to see Amphill receiving the same support and interest as other places.</p> <p>Response from Town Clerk received on 21st September 2009.</p>
Arlesey	<p>The Town Council RESOLVED at its meeting on the 6th October 2009:</p> <p>The Town Council supports the proposed process for supporting Town Centre Management</p> <p>The Town Council agrees the proposed Town Centre Partnership should have its own constitution and not be within the CBC constitution.</p> <p>The Town Clerk will attend future meetings so that Arlesey will be included in the initial set up of the partnership</p>
Biggleswade	<p>Comments received at Town Council Meeting on 7th Sept 2009.</p> <p>Would welcome their own control of own town centre forums and partnerships</p>

	<p>If funding needs to be via precept then so be it</p> <p>Happy with the general direction of the proposals</p> <p>Would like to have a stronger voice and greater communication with Central Bedfordshire Council</p>
<p>Houghton Regis</p> <p>A response was given by the Town Council as there was no opportunity for comment by the TCMC within the consultation period. A response from the TCMC will be gathered before the Executive meeting in November.</p>	<p>Generally concerns are expressed over the complexity of the proposed set up. The proposal appears to be trying to establish one 'process for supporting town centre development' to fit all town centres. As previously discussed the Town Centres in Central Bedfordshire are all very different and require an individual approach to their management & development.</p> <p>The proposal introduces another set of development plans and action plans and puts considerable onus on town councils to undertake this additional work. There appears to be little regards to the capacity of town councils to undertake this additional works.</p> <p>Appendix A lists proposed economic indicators for town centres. Bids for funding would be assessed against these indicators and concern is expressed that smaller towns like Houghton Regis would not be on an equal footing and funding may repeatedly go to the same areas</p> <p>The indicators were considered vague and concern was expressed over the possibility of gathering accurate and comparable information, especially if collected by individual Town Councils.</p> <p>Para 5.3 suggests that with Town Centre Groups not being within the constitution this would allow for maximum flexibility but it was not understood why this would be the case. It was suggested that inclusion in the constitution would ensure a firm commitment from Central Bedfordshire to Town Centres.</p> <p>Within the Central Bedfordshire Executive Committee making the funding decisions it was felt that decisions would be further moved away from the local community. In the long term it was felt that this would not be sustainable. Concern was expressed that those making the decisions would not understand or fully appreciate local issues and priorities. The list of proposed membership of Town Centre Partnerships does not have enough local involvement.</p> <p>It was generally felt that whilst the Town Council was keen to work in partnership with Central Bedfordshire on matters of common interest including economic development there was general opposition to the proposal.</p> <p>Comments received by letter dated 12th August 2009.</p>

Dunstable	<p>The Town Council is represented by its Members on the TCMC and as a result we are safe to take the view of the Council as that of the TCMC. Our constitution sets out that the TCMC reports directly to full Council which does not meet until the 5 Oct. I may do a report on the issue to Council but it will be for information rather than for decision.</p> <p>Response from Town Clerk 9th September 2009.</p>
Sandy	<p>Members' supported the initiative and were keen to take part in it. They see it as extending the work being done on the Town Plan.</p> <p>They weren't happy about the composition of the group illustrated in Appendix B as they thought there should be some Councillor involvement, whether it be Central Bedfordshire Ward member or Town Councillor.</p> <p>Received by Email from Town Clerk 6th October 2009</p>
Potton	<p>Proposals discussed at council meeting 6/10/09. Town Clerk said Potton would like to express interest and support the proposals. Potton Town Plan Group will be the contact group. They would like their own constitution and not to come under CBC constitution.</p>
Shefford	<p>Awaiting reponse from Town Council Meeting</p>
Flitwick	<p>Awaiting response from Town Council Meeting</p>

Town Centre Management Committees

Dunstable	<p>Proposed Officer Group needs to be Chaired by a Council Member – suggested that this is the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth & Regeneration.</p> <p>There is a need for a Town Centres Strategy for the whole of Central Bedfordshire which is properly funded not just patches of funding here and there.</p> <p>The budgetary expenditure should be committed for 3 years rather than annually to allow for 'properly planned' activity to be developed.</p> <p>It was noted that Dunstable TCMC produce an annual action plan already.</p> <p>It was noted that Dunstable TCMC has retail & business community representation (although not voting rights).</p> <p>It was noted that a reduction in funding would have a significant impact on the 'bottom line' of Dunstable Town Council (£25kpa) and it was strongly felt that CBC were ignoring this situation.</p>
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	<p>Members unanimously voted to remain within the CBC Constitution.</p> <p>It was raised that if the TCMC were not within the CBC constitution that it would be at the Town Council's discretion whether CBC Ward Members sat on / Chaired the TCMC.</p> <p>Members unanimously voted (Cllr Carole Hegley abstained) that the funding arrangements currently in place should remain.</p> <p>The Town Council would like to develop KPI's and these could dovetail with CBC KPI's.</p> <p>Notes of meeting on 6th August 2009. Confirmed as accurate by Town Clerk by email.</p>
<p>Leighton Linlade</p>	<p>67/LL CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION – THE WAY FORWARD</p> <p>The Committee received a Central Bedfordshire Officer report which outlined the proposals relating to town centres within the new Central Bedfordshire Council area that was due to be put before the Central Bedfordshire Executive in the autumn of 2009.</p> <p>Members noted that under the previous local authority arrangements the Parish of Leighton-Linslade had the services of a Town Centre Manager and that an annual budget in the region of £37,000 had been allocated to the Town Centres Management Committee. The Committee noted that the post of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade Town Centres Manager no longer existed within the new Central Bedfordshire Authority. It was acknowledged that Central Bedfordshire had, as gesture of goodwill, agreed the revenue funding for 2009/10 on the understanding that consultation would take place throughout the year to introduce a process that allowed for output focused town centre development across the whole of Central Bedfordshire. The Committee was further informed that previous capital funding allocated to the Leighton Buzzard and Linslade Town Centres Management Committee, a sum in the region of £180,000, had been reallocated to Central Reserves.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the new Central Bedfordshire Authority sought parity of treatment and approach for all towns within its area. Hence the consultation provided a new process for all towns within Central Bedfordshire. It was accepted that whilst support would be provided by Central Bedfordshire Officers, Town Councils would be responsible for their own Operational Action Plan, Town Centre & Retail Development Plan and substantiated bids for economic development funding and other grants from the new Central Bedfordshire Authority.</p>

	<p>A wide ranging discussion took place which celebrated the past work of the Town Centre Management Committee which had been achieved with the officer and financial support of South Bedfordshire District Council. Members noted that the consultation paper was about process not funding but they expressed the view that guaranteed future funding was essential for the Committee to operate effectively and successfully.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Central Bedfordshire Executive reject the proposed policy document “Process for supporting Town Centre Development” and that the working partnership between Central Bedfordshire and the Leighton-Linslade Town Centre Management Committee operate in the same way as the previous partnership working with South Bedfordshire District Council – with specific reference to guaranteed annual funding and specific Officer support.</p> <p>Minute of Town Centre Management Committee on 26th August 2009</p>
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Town Clerk Reponses – (All received by email)

Amphill	I've read through the briefing and I agree that myself and perhaps one nominated Councillor would be happy to take forward working with Central Bedfordshire to draw up a Town Centre plan.
Biggleswade	Invited to Town Council Meeting for a response to consultation
Potton	Invited to Town Council Meeting for a response to Town Council Meeting
Stotfold	<p>Further to our telephone discussion this morning where you briefed me on the process for supporting town centre management and the documents I have received from you, I now forward my initial views as Clerk to the Council as requested.</p> <p>These comments are my own views, and I anticipate that the matter will be referred to our Town Enhancement Committee at their meeting at the end of September for further discussion and to obtain Members' views.</p> <p>The process appears to be a fair way of assessing each town's individual needs in terms of economic growth and town centre vitality within the Central Bedfordshire area.</p> <p>My initial thought was that as Stotfold is currently producing a Town Plan, which includes a focus on our town centre area and future improvements to attract business and visitors, it is important that any preparation of Town Centre and Retail Action Plans include and tie in the comments and actions raised from the local Town Plan for each town.</p>

	<p>Representatives of existing retail forums such as Chamber of Commerce should also be involved in any assessment or town centre management committees, as should representatives of Town Councils in order that all relevant parties are able to have an input.</p> <p>I personally can't see the Town Council having an issue with actioning the points identified in the preparation of the Action Plans, provided there is good support provision from the Economic Growth & Regeneration team at Central Beds (or appropriate other), and assistance in providing or obtaining appropriate levels of funding for such actions.</p> <p>Once the matter has been considered by my Members at their Town Enhancement meeting I will forward you their response.</p>
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