

**LEIGHTON LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**June 2016**

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE**

**Purpose of report: - for information**

**1 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

The ASB & Statutory Nuisance Team have achieved the following for LB & Linslade during 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

- 1 Community Protection Notice (CPN) warning issued for street drinking and 1 for vehicle nuisance
- 2 CPNs issued for street drinking

- Accumulation of waste – 1
- Dog barking - 1
- Fly-tipping – 7
- Graffiti - 1
- Nuisance Neighbours – 1
- Noise – 5
- Rowdy/inconsiderate – 6

22 cases in total

**1.2 Summary of recorded CCTV Incidents Leighton Buzzard 1st January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

This report contains data gathered by the Council’s CCTV Control Room located at Watling House, Dunstable. It includes details of CCTV monitored incidents and arrests by the police in the towns of Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard. It does not include details of the police response to any particular incident where an arrest is not made, nor does it include incidents not captured by CCTV; for this reason the data will not reflect the overall picture of crime and disorder in any area. Personal data is excluded to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Brief Summary</b>	<b>No of Arrests</b>
26/1/16 10:19	Bridge Street	Breach of Community Protection Order	
3/2/16 13:30	Waterbourne Walk	Male robs Salvation Army shop	
11/2/16 12:43	High Street	Affray	2
15/2/16 00:33	High Street	Request from police for additional footage relating to Santander ram raid	

5/3/16 17:00	Aldi Store	Serious Assault	7
25/3/16 21:30	Astral Park	Motor cycles causing damage and ASB	
28/3/16 00:38	Lake Street	Affray outside the Lancer	2

**Notes**

There were 7 incidents recorded by CCTV during the period leading to a total of 11 arrests. CCTV continues to monitor the area round Astral park Pavilion for problems caused by motorcycles and monitoring of the town centre for problems caused by street drinkers is ongoing.

A re-deployable CCTV camera has been placed in Talbot Court due to recent criminal damage to vehicles and to re-assure elderly residents in the flats and to help police to identify offenders.

**2 BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT UPDATE**

**2.1 Business support**

**Central Bedfordshire College project** – The College had been working in partnership with the Vinci Technology Centre in Stanbridge Road to develop an Engineering and Construction Skills Centre. However, due to contractual issues between the two parties, the Stanbridge Road site will not be progressed. The Council’s Regeneration & Business Directorate are continuing to work and support the college in finding an alternative site within Leighton Buzzard.

**Business TimeBank** – this programme is still operational and we are still receiving enquiries but not as frequently as we used to.

There are different ways that we engage with the business community in order to let them know about the business support offer. We promote this across Central Bedfordshire, including the Leighton-Linslade area in the following ways:

- Businesses can sign up for regular business email news bulletins through ‘Let’s Talk Business’;
- Our new website prompts people to sign up for news bulletins;
- Our social media channels now include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube,
- Detailed information can be found on the ‘Be Central Bedfordshire’ website;
- ‘Business to Business’ Magazine in which the Council has a regular featured page;
- The Business Support team attend the annual ‘Business Network Event’;
- Work with ‘Velocity Growth Hub’ and the business advisers to promote the offer to businesses;
- Promote the business support offer on the Councils website

### 2.2 Employment and Skills

The Bedfordshire Employment Support Service (BESS) continues to support the residents of Linslade and Leighton Buzzard through the provision of a wide range of courses. All of the courses are linked to improving employability and are aimed mostly at those who are unemployed with modest prior attainment. The courses include, amongst others, Maths & English, Interview Skills, Warehousing, IT Skills and Independent Living (which is aimed at residents with mental health needs). A number of these courses are accredited, which means a certificate is awarded on successful completion of a course.

The courses are delivered by either the Council's own Direct Delivery team or through a network of external providers. BESS also funds the Work Clubs which are well used and this is successfully organised by Voluntary Community Action based in Leighton Buzzard.

Referrals for courses come from a variety of sources and include Job CentrePlus, Work Clubs and through responding to direct publicity. Each Provider will promote their own courses in a variety of ways. The Direct Delivery team promotes the Maths & English courses through flyers and word-of-mouth in the Library, Job CentrePlus and publicising via social media with occasional advertisements placed in a local newspaper.

Since September 2015, BESS has worked with 164 individual residents across Linslade and Leighton Buzzard. While the majority were unemployed, 37 did have a job and 15 of these progressed onto further education.

There were 99 individual learners who were unemployed. Of these 27 progressed onto further education, 6 have gained employment and 7 have commenced voluntary work. During this period BESS has recorded a total of 28 learners who are 'economically inactive' which means they are not seeking employment.

Also during the period since September 2015, BESS has provided funding for two apprentices. One is an Intermediate Apprentice Level 2 Certificate in Early Years Education, the other is an advanced apprenticeship as a Level 3 Diploma in Early Years Education.

At the time of writing, BESS is recommissioning the external providers with a view to letting two year contracts from August 2016. This will continue making employability type training courses available for local residents. Overwhelmingly positive feedback has been received from local residents undertaking the training courses and this is fed back to the Providers and their staff.

#### **New Businesses –**

Data from Banksearch indicates that since March 2016 there have been 37 new business start ups (measured through new bank accounts being registered)

### 2.3 Inward Investment

**Be Central Bedfordshire** – The website continues to attract interest to the area, and has been nominated for a national Planning and Placemaking Award for Promoting Economic Growth.

The highly acclaimed **Be Central Bedfordshire** website, which was launched in March 2015, has been shortlisted for a second national award this year. The website has been shortlisted in the Website of the Year category within the Public Sector Communication Awards.

The website is a public-private partnership facilitated by the council, which has been designed to provide information for businesses looking to locate in Central Bedfordshire and to provide existing businesses details of the support available to help them grow.

The website has a free property search facility, which has played a major part in generating a record number of inward investment enquiries and promoting Central Bedfordshire as a great place to live and work. The winners will be announced at the prestigious ceremony at Arsenal’s Emirates Stadium on Thursday, 14 July.

Be Central Bedfordshire is also shortlisted in the Promoting Economic Growth category in the UK Planning and Placemaking Awards, with the winners being announced on Thursday, 23 June.

The shortlisting of this new investment approach reflects the innovative and proactive steps officers have made in securing investment and sustainable growth offer into the area.

According to figures supplied by EGi (Estates Gazette interactive) there have been 3 commercial deals completed in the Leighton-Linslade area since March 2016 and there have been 257 online property searches in the last 3 months.

The commercial deals are as follows:

- 1 x Retail
- 1 x Industrial
- 1 x Transport and Logistics

The feedback from the commercial agents is that there continues to be a shortage of freehold land or industrial units but they are receiving positive feedback about Leighton’s proximity to the new A5 – M1 link, which should create further interest in the area as a result of the improved connectivity to the M1.

The employment land on the East of Leighton site is generating interest, both via the Council and directly with the promoters.

A recent success for the Council’s Business Investment team is Maritime Transport, the UK’s largest independent Transport businesses recently moved into Spinney Park, creating potentially up to 100 new jobs for the area.

**Bedfordshire Food and Drink Awards** – CBC is headline sponsor of the awards where the public nominate their favourite business for 14 category awards. 15 businesses from Leighton Linslade have been shortlisted for the awards ceremony on 13<sup>th</sup> June.

**2.4 High Street Vacancy Levels**

Town	May 2015	August 2015	November 2015	February 2016	May 2016	% of all A class premises
Amphill	1	0	2	2	0	0
Arlesey	1	1	1	1	1	6.7
Biggleswade	7	4	5	10	11	7.6
Dunstable	47	50	47	47	50	18.8
Flitwick	1	1	1	1	0	0

Houghton Regis	2	2	1	1	1	3.4
<b>Leighton Buzzard</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Sandy	4	4	3	3	4	6
Shefford	0	0	1	1	1	2.5
Stotfold	0	0	1	1	1	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>9.1</b>

Despite the increase in vacant premises in Leighton, the over rate remains below Central Bedfordshire average. Furthermore, two of the vacant premises did have sold / let boards up, indicating they would shortly be occupied.

### 3 LEISURE, LIBRARIES & COUNTRYSIDE

#### 3.1 Community Physical Activity Team

##### Our Parks – Group Exercise Classes

All enquiries should go through [www.ourparks.org.uk](http://www.ourparks.org.uk)

CBC Contact: Vicky Buckland 0300 300 4248

Funded through Sport England Community Sports Activation Fund



**Get Fit for Free.** Boxfit classes - a fun way to get fit through a high intensity full body work-out. The class incorporates solid boxing pad work with body conditioning. Currently running twice a week at Appenine Way – Leighton Buzzard.

All classes are led by experienced, fully qualified and insured instructors to cater for all levels of experience, from beginner to expert.

Other programmes:

Health Walks – 22 participants registered with 12-14 attending each week

Walking Football – Cedars Academy –continues to run on a Wednesday evening from 7-8pm with sessions having a weekly attendance of 10/11 participants. £1.50 per session

Seated Exercise Classes – Tudor Court – 20 participants registered with approximate 9/10 attending each week.

Activity 4 Health Scheme continues to run at Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre – with a regular daily register of 8/10 participants on the rolling programme.

#### 3.2 Countryside Access

Friends of Linslade Wood and Friends of Tiddenfoot are about to be judged for the Green Flag Community Award scheme in the next two weeks.

The Chair of Friends of Tiddenfoot has been entered for the annual CBC 'Cheering Volunteering' awards.

Friends of Tiddenfoot have been busy with their 'Foragers Way' hedge laying project and CBC are working with them on restoring and managing areas of rare acid grassland for biodiversity.

Preparations are underway for the Canal Festival on 30th July 2016. The Sites team continue to work closely with the Friends of Linslade Wood with regard to woodland management and developing a programme of walks over the coming year.

Heath and Reach P3 who work alongside LLTC and other P3/Friends groups in the Leighton-Linslade area have reformed/restructured and are working on a series of projects over the year including a survey of all their rights of way, running their annual 'Toad Patrol' helping toads cross busy roads in the village, management of the Heath and Reach community woodland and a 'Clean for the Queen' clean-up around the parish.

### **3.3 Leighton Buzzard Library and Theatre**

After many years service the Centre Manager, Hazel Kerr, has retired. A new Centre Manager, Colette Seale, was appointed in January 2016.

The Centre is currently undergoing building works due for completion in July. New air handling units, acoustic ceiling tiles and energy saving lighting are being installed in both the Theatre and Library.

#### **Looking Back**

There have been many events in both the Library and the Theatre. Maddy Prior was a great audience puller and there was positive feedback from those lucky enough to get to see her. Library as a Laboratory held one of the final events in this very mixed and exciting programme. Geraldine Pilgrim did a site specific performance of her successful installation 'Handbags'. Local residents were invited to take part in a choreographed event in the Theatre auditorium.

The Library hosted 'Librarian Theatre' whose 'potted' version of Hamlet was received well and attracted a new audience to the Library.

A regular weekly session 'crafty tots' has been set up and is proving very popular alongside the Story Time, Rhyme Time, Lego club and Babies Meet and Chat sessions already provided on a weekly basis.

New bench tables have been installed ready for our new Public Network machines.

#### **Looking Forward**

The Theatre has an exciting and varied programme over the coming months. Live performances for children including 'My Pet Monster and Me' and 'A Boy and A Bear in A Boat'

There continues to be a variety of films and Cinema events. We have a Royal Opera House Live Screening of Frankenstein, and local theatre groups will be performing Blackadder and Bugsy Malone.

The final event for Library as a Laboratory will take place next month. This will be the launch of the Music CD that has been produced as a result of the Dump it on Parliament event held last year. The artists Dash'n'Dem alongside all the other participants will be on site for the launch.

The Library is preparing for the annual Summer Reading Challenge, always a busy, exciting and challenging time, and assembly visits have been arranged for all our local schools. Craft events will be running throughout the summer holidays. Animal Edutainment will also be paying a repeat visit.

We will be having a series of talks by Bedfordshire Archives and Records office. We have an active family history group running weekly sessions and previous sessions provided by BLARS proved very successful

**The council is asking for your views about proposals to change opening hours at your libraries.**

The Library Service is required to meet an efficiencies target, identified in the council’s Medium Term Financial Plan, of £85,000 from 1 April 2017. Overall, the Library Service will be reducing opening hours by 30 hours a week.

As part of the proposed changes the Library Service is also trying to find ways of opening libraries to communities outside normal opening hours so as to make the best use of the buildings. This includes evenings and weekends. Buildings could be used for activities such as health advice sessions, local meetings, or adult education. This is part of the council’s objectives in the Five Year Plan to foster self sustaining communities and support people to help themselves and others.

These proposals mean that no library in Central Bedfordshire will be closed. All libraries will retain professionally paid staff.

**4 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

Highways numbers for December 2015 are below , numbers for April 2016 will be reported at the meeting

<b>Highways performance - December 2015</b>	
Potholes repaired	288
Carriageway resurfaced	446m
Street lights repaired	395
Street lights upgraded to LED	307
Emergency street light repairs	22
Rural grass cut	150km
Gullies cleaned	1,012
Gritting runs	2

(Please note that these figures are Central Bedfordshire wide)

Mild weather meant an incredibly low number of gritting runs. Current resurfacing programmes were completed in December; the new programmes start in March 2016. Rural grass cutting was also completed in December and resumes in April.

**5 SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

**5.1** Central Bedfordshire Council wants to improve the day services available to older people and adults with disabilities.

It is understood that people can get concerned that services they rely on may be changed or withdrawn so to be clear our intentions are to improve the day offer available.

The first thing is to meet with current and future customers, their families and carers through the summer of 2016 to understand what is important and what they value, help shape the future offer for day services. There will then be a formal consultation on the plans in late 2016.

Key Priorities over the next 3 months:

Our priorities include:

- Ensuring all key stakeholders are fully informed and involved in what we are doing, maintaining a co-production approach to improving the Day Offer.
- Engagement with staff and customers via meetings and other forums to establish their thoughts of 'what good looks like'.
- Promotion of and commencement of the formal consultation process to gain formal feedback from stakeholders regarding any proposed changes.

Key messages:

- We want customers and family carers to help us develop new services that meet their needs.
- Nothing will change until everyone has had their say and the new approach is agreed, then we will discuss individual needs and the options with everyone who is affected.

We are not changing the eligibility for day services, but the way some of these are delivered may change. If you receive day services now you will continue to do so but we want customers and carers to have choices that are more suited to their needs.

## **6 YOUTH SERVICES**

### **Update on NEET – Central Bedfordshire**

The levels of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains low for young people aged 16 to 19 within the Central Bedfordshire area. Out of the total Central Bedfordshire cohort of 8757 young people, at the end of March 2016 there were only 280 (3.4%) reported to have a NEET status and the number of young people in Education, Employment or Training (EET) was 8073 (91.9%). The proportion of young people (School years 12-14) still 'In Learning' has risen to 83.5%.

### **NEET Overview for Leighton Buzzard**

Since December 2015, there has been a very small decrease in the number of NEET young people living in the Leighton Buzzard area of 1. In December 2015, 51 were recorded as being NEET and at the end of March 2016, this had decreased to 50.

The overall % proportion of the Leighton Buzzard population aged 16-19 who are NEET is 3.9%.

### **Characteristics of the NEET Group in Leighton Buzzard:**

The following information provides an overview of the characteristics of the current NEET group in relation to:

- **Area:** The ward with the highest number of recorded NEET, 31 (62% of the NEET group in the area), remains as Leighton Buzzard North. The Heath and Reach ward consistently has the lowest number with only 3 (6% of the NEET group in the area). The general trend for the Leighton Buzzard area is downward apart from Leighton



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Buzzard North which has had a small increase of 5 young persons being recorded as NEET since December 2015.

- **Gender:** The gender breakdown shows that the number of females who are NEET is 27 (54%), which is higher than the male number of 23 (46%). Since December 2015 the trend for males is decreasing whilst the female group is increasing.
- **Age:** The age breakdown indicates that the number of NEET young people increases with age. As in previous months it is the older young people who tend to be part of the NEET group. The 18 year old group is currently the largest with 30% of the areas NEETs.
- **NEET Status:** The number of young people within the NEET group currently available to the labour market and actively seeking EET is 31 (62%) compared to the 19 (38%) who are currently not available for EET due to their personal circumstances (e.g. illness, pregnancy, etc.).
- **Time:** The majority of young people within the NEET group have been recorded as NEET for between 3-6 months.
- **Unknown Destinations:** At the end of March there were 50 (3.9%) young people living in the area whose destinations were 'Unknown'. Included within these were 4 that were contacted but were unwilling to provide any information concerning their current destination and the remaining 46 young people who could not be contacted using the information held.

The following table gives a break down of the NEETs recorded as living within the area followed by a comparison with the two other areas.

Ward	Cohort	NEET	%
Leighton Buzzard North	435	31	(7.2%)
Leighton Buzzard South	354	7	(2%)
Linslade	375	9	(2.4%)
Heath & Reach	127	3	(2.4%)

Headline Figures		
Total YPs in area	1291	
EET	1191	(92.3%)
NEET	50	(3.9%)
Unknown	50	(3.9%)

The next group of tables enables a comparison to be made of the NEET characteristics for the Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard areas. The percentages allow comparisons to be made against each area's total NEET population.

Total number of NEETs within each area	Dunstable	Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard
	63 (4.9%)	33 (5.1%)	50 (3.9%)

Gender	Dunstable	Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard
Male	26 (41.3%)	18 (54.6%)	23 (46%)
Female	37 (58.8%)	15 (45.5%)	27 (54%)

Age	Dunstable	Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard
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16	6	(9.6%)	5	(15.2%)	7	(14%)
17	16	(25.4%)	12	(36.4%)	14	(28%)
18	25	(39.7%)	10	(30.4%)	15	(30%)
19	16	(25.4%)	6	(18.2%)	14	(28%)

Length of Time NEET	Dunstable		Houghton Regis		Leighton Buzzard	
Less than 3 months	26	(41.3%)	18	(54.6%)	12	(24%)
3 - 6 months	24	(38.1%)	11	(33.4%)	22	(44%)
6+ months	13	(20.7%)	4	(12.2%)	16	(32%)

Unknown Destinations	Dunstable		Houghton Regis		Leighton Buzzard	
Refused Information	6	(9.6%)	2	(6.1%)	4	(8%)
Cannot be Contacted	32	(50.8%)	23	(69.7%)	46	(92%)
Unknown	2	(3.2%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)

NEETs Available to Work	Dunstable		Houghton Regis		Leighton Buzzard	
Seeking Employment or Training	40	(63.5%)	25	(75.8%)	31	(62%)

NEETs Unavailable to Work	Dunstable		Houghton Regis		Leighton Buzzard	
Due to Personal Circumstances	23	(36.6%)	8	(24.3%)	19	(38%)

### Next Steps:

The Youth Support Service (YSS) will be taking the following action to ensure NEET numbers remain low in Leighton Buzzard:

- The YSS will continue to use new approaches to tracking young people so they can be identified and supported into education. This will include the use of social media and text services
- The YSS will continue to make available high quality Information, Advice and Guidance to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET in Leighton Buzzard
- The YSS will undertake further analysis of the NEET group – particularly in Leighton Buzzard North to establish whether further work could take place to support young people at risk of becoming NEET

A joint presentation to the Partnership Committee is planned for December 2016 together with TACTIC

## 7 SCHOOLS SCHOOLS

### 7.1 School Admissions in Leighton Buzzard & Linslade

Across Central Bedfordshire 94 per cent of the 3,392 pupils were allocated their first preference school in the on time Starting School 2016 allocation. Of those that didn't, four per cent got their second preference, one per cent achieved their third preference and the remaining one per cent will be allocated an alternative school which has places available.

In the Transfer to Middle 2016 allocation 96 per cent were allocated their first preference school; with three per cent offered their second preference and one per cent their third preference.

For Transfer to Upper 2016 all parents requesting Cedars Upper and Vandyke Upper were offered places at their preferred schools.

### **7.2. New School Places for Leighton Buzzard & Linslade**

Official opening ceremonies were held before half term at 2 Leighton Buzzard schools – Leedon Lower and Clipstone Brook Lower. Both schools have been expanded by an additional 150 places under the Council's New School Places Programme in response to the increasing demand for school places within the town.

Leighton Middle School is currently being expanded from a 4 form of entry, 480 place middle school for pupils aged 9 to 13 to a 5 form of entry (600 place) middle school. The additional places will be available from 1 September 2016.

We continue to monitor housing development in the area and the timing of new school places required as a result.

## **8 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Joint Committees Review**

Following consultation with the 4 Joint Committees across Central Bedfordshire discussions are on going with Members and senior management to determine how we can strengthen relationships with T&PCs.

These discussions are built on the consensus amongst Central Bedfordshire Council and Town Council members as to the value of the joint committee concept and improvements needed including more weight and influence and be on the radar of officers CBC and TC especially for locality working

Cllr Tracey Stock has been given responsibility as a Deputy Exec Member for Resources to look after relationships with TPC's.

### **Cheering Volunteering 2016**

99 nominations for the Cheering Volunteering 2016 Awards were received and 529 guests booked seats to enjoy the celebration and awards evening at the Grove theatre on 7 June . This was an increase on 400 guests in 2015.

The Grove hosted the 2016 awards which took place on Tuesday, 7 June – at the end of National Volunteers' Week –compered by Tom Jones impersonator Billy Lee, who was a huge hit with the crowd.

The event was organised by the council's Partnerships and Community Engagement Team, along with Central Bedfordshire's Volunteer Centres, to say thank you to those who give their time to help others. Seven awards were presented:

- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer Group of the Year
- Outstanding Contribution
- Lifetime Achievement
- Fundraiser of the Year
- Panel's Choice

We have received excellent feedback from guests and sponsors and are looking to make this an annual event. Leighton- Linslade was well represented by the Children's Theatre and Graham Mountford for his excellent contribution to responding to local emergencies.

### **9 WASTE**

#### **9.1 Looking back**

##### We achieved:

Waste Services helped clear up waste after the recent May Day Fayre.

Grounds maintenance has begun with grass cutting underway and 3 weed sprays due over the growing season.

##### Key issues:

Following the application of information stickers on recycling bins before Christmas, waste collection staff have been affixing tags to recycling bins that contain items that cannot be recycled. This has generally been well-received.

Grounds maintenance has commenced, with regular grass cutting every 3 weeks during the growing season. Grass cutting in Redwood Glade is to be carried out prior to their street party in June. Similarly, there are various other street parties taking place which necessitate road closures.

The number of abandoned vehicles has increased over recent months due to the low value of scrap metal.

Dog warden patrols for dog fouling have been carried out in: Appenine Way, Bassett Road, Billington Road, Billington Road Recreation Ground, King Street, Queen Street, Vandyke Road.

#### **Looking forward**

##### We are planning:

Street cleansing will be carried out along the route for Anglia Bloom to ensure it is clean for the judging day on 7<sup>th</sup> July. In addition permission has been given by Highways to LLTC for Leighton in Bloom to undertake some landscaping works to the Hockliffe roundabout and adjacent beds in advance of judging day.