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DUNSTABLE
TOWN COUNCIL

Your Ref

Our Ref: DA/CB/C22

Date: 16 June 2017

Dear Colleague

Could you please note that a meeting of Dunstable Joint Committee will be held on **Thursday 22 June 2017 at 7.00 pm** at Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable when the following business will be transacted.

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on Thursday 4 May 2017 (see page 1).
4. Specific Declarations of Interest.
5. Chairman's Announcements.
6. Public Question Time (maximum 15 minutes).
7. Themed discussion – Highways, High Street and Detrunking (maximum 60 minutes).
8. Estate Regeneration DCLG Grant - Ingrid Hooley
9. Reports from co-opted or outside bodies.
 - Keep Dunstable Tidy (see page 7).
10. Action Plan, budget update and proposals for the Christmas programme 2017 report of the Town Centre Manager (see page 8).
11. Questions on Central Bedfordshire Council – update on services (see page 15).

Yours faithfully

David Ashlee
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

To: Members of Dunstable Joint Committee

Central Bedfordshire Council

Councillors John Chatterley, Eugene Ghent, Carole Hegley (Chairman), Nigel Warren and Nigel Young.

Dunstable Town Council

Councillors Liz Jones, John Kane, Gloria Martin, Pat Staples and Andy Whayman.

Co-opted Advisors:

Chairman, Dunstable Licensees Association
Mr H Garrod, Promoting Dunstable
Dunstable Market Representative
Mr R Pepworth, South Beds Friends of the Earth
Business Development Manager, Asda
Mr B Groves, Central Bedfordshire College
Quadrant Shopping Centre Manager
Vacancy Dunstable Business Forum
Grove Theatre
ViViane Vayssieres
Sharon Knott, DLDD Trust
John Gelder, Voluntary and Community Action
Sharon Warboys, Town Centre Champion
Cllr A Sparrow, Dunstable In Bloom

Other attendees:

Bedfordshire Police

Other

Town and Central Bedfordshire Councillors for information

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

HELD AT WATLING HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE

ON THURSDAY 4 MAY 2017

- Present: Councillors Carole Hegley (Chairman), John Chatterley, Nigel Warren and Nigel Young (Central Bedfordshire Council CBC). Liz Jones (Vice-Chairman), Peter Hollick, John Kane, Gloria Martin and Pat Staples (Dunstable Town Council, DTC).
- In Attendance: Hugh Garrod (Promoting Dunstable), Roger Pepworth (South Beds Friends of the Earth), Barry Groves (Central Bedfordshire College), Sharon Warboys (Town Centre Champion), Councillor Ann Sparrow (Dunstable In Bloom) and ViViane Vayssieres with David Ashlee – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Clare Brett (Town Centre Manager) (DTC) and Peter Fraser – Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support (CBC).
- Apologies for Absence: Councillor Eugene Ghent (CBC), Rhea Yeung (Grove Theatre), Jason Buckley (Quadrant Shopping Centre), Sharon Knott (DLDD Trust) and John Gelder (Voluntary and Community Action).
- Members of the public: 1

10. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on Thursday 2 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Staples declared a pecuniary interest regarding any issues to be discussed relating to Dunstable Market.

12. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the recent visit to Dunstable by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, stating that it had been a delight to welcome them to Priors View and that the event had gone well and was well attended. She thanked all those who attended. Some discussion took place on this note-worthy event for the town.

The Chairman reported that Central Bedfordshire Council was moving forward in its review of Joint Committees. Volunteers were requested for a dedicated Task Group from the Committee to assist with the review.

RESOLVED: that Councillors Hegley and Chatterley (CBC) and Jones and Kane (DTC) form a Joint Committee Task Group with David Ashlee and Peter Fraser.

The Chairman confirmed that the S106 Grant Scheme was progressing well and that there was now a need to promote it.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to create and circulate a one page document on the criteria and how to apply for the grant that could be used to promote them.

13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A university of Bedfordshire Student studying Journalism was in attendance at the meeting and the Chairman extended a welcome. There were no questions.

14. ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET UPDATE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted the available budget for 2017/18, which included underspend from 2016/17 including remaining funds for the 2016 Special Saturday programme. Members were asked to consider funding a number of proposals for the year and to suggest any additional proposals, both of which would serve to refresh the existing Action Plan, along with any other previously agreed actions.

Discussion then took place on the suggested initiatives.

RESOLVED: that the Committee agree to the following expenditure for 2017/18:

Suggested Initiative	Comments	Cost
TCMC performance measures	Annual footfall survey to take place the first weekend in March 2018.	£650
Christmas Promotions	To create and promote a programme of Christmas promotions (ice rink/lighting finale for Torchlight event).	£15,000
War Memorial Refurbishment	Contribution towards the refurbishments of the War memorial in Priory Gardens (to refurbish the paved area and add a commemorative Combined Armed Services plaque/carving).	£2,000
Big Lunch 2017	Big Lunch event for over 65s in Grove House Gardens, aimed at the socially isolated. 6 June 2017. Funding requested for the lunch element of the event.	£500
Middle Row Lighting	To fund additional lighting under the CBC canopy in Middle Row.	£3,000
Total:		<u>£21,150</u>

RESOLVED: Once further work and costings have been completed on the projects above, delegated authority be given to the Chairman, in liaison with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement to authorise expenditure and associated action to carry out these initiatives.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to progress the action for additional lighting in Middle Row.

Following the success of the MTRF bid, it was further recommended that the previously allocated contingency for signage improvements (Dunstable Joint Committee Minute 13, 12 July 2012) should be added to the £70,000 secured by DTC for signage and street furniture improvements following the de-trunking of the A5. A discussion took place on signage requirements and it was confirmed to Members that a list of proposed signage had been given to the highway contractor by DTC and the list included local attractions and would be focused on the town centre. However, it was clarified that CBC would need to include a mechanism to maintain and approve signage standards and style for the future. It was further confirmed that some signage was also being investigated for the White Lion/Busway stop.

ACTION: The Town Centre Manager to circulate the list of proposed signage to the Committee.

It was requested that the contractor present proposals and designs to DTC and the Joint Committee.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support and Councillor Young to discuss the degree of involvement in the project by DTC and the Joint Committee with the MTRF Board.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to invite Highways officers/designers to the next meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee.

It was therefore agreed to leave the signage contingency as a separate fund at the current time.

Discussion took place on the Christmas programme for 2017 and Members expressed a wish to promote the Christmas Shop Front Competition again for 2017.

ACTION: The Town Centre Manager bring back costs for the proposed Christmas programme to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were informed that a S215 officer had been trained and had been taking pictures of Dunstable properties and beginning the process. Various individual properties were discussed and it was reported that another meeting would be held in 3 weeks' time with CBC officers for an update and that actions were being escalated with officers. It was confirmed however that CBC has no power to force builders to complete when planning permission has been granted.

The issues with the new pay on exit car parking at Ashton Square were discussed and members were advised that these were being investigated. It was confirmed that free parking on Tuesday afternoons was still in place at the moment. Members expressed concern and disappointment about parking fees and the negative impact this was having on the Market. Members were reminded however that they have the opportunity to lobby the Leader of CBC.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to check if the Car Park barrier let users out without putting the car registration in first if they had not parked.

A question was raised on how much the net cost would be to make the car parks free of charge and it was reported that a new back office system for CBC would make more detailed information possible.

The town centre performance results for 2016/17 were discussed and the high level of retail was noted along with the low level of vacant units, especially in relation to the Quadrant Shopping Centre.

Discussion took place on the Market and the programme of Craft and Themed markets that were being offered at a discounted rate to traders that had already resulted in new traders to the Market. Members were informed that a survey on Dunstable Market was currently being undertaken and the results would be presented to the Town Council's Community Services Committee meeting in June.

It was requested that consistent population data be provided, however, it was noted that there were no plans for another census.

15. CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL- UPDATE ON SERVICES

The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support took questions on the Central Bedfordshire Council report.

The arrests made through CCTV activity were highlighted and a discussion regarding licensing followed where it was requested that DTC get licensing reports and the opportunity to comment on licensing applications.

ACTION: Town Clerk and Chief Executive to contact the Assistant Director Public Protection & Transport to progress.

ACTION: Chairman and Councillor Young to discuss localised police resources with the PCC.

It was noted that the Committee did not have a representative from the licensing trade.

ACTION: Chairman to write to the Chairman of the Dunstable Licensees Association to encourage attendance engagement with the Dunstable Joint Committee.

Concern was raised at the level of bike crime and anti-social behaviour in relation to bikes.

The Town Centre Manager informed Members that a meeting was to be held the following day with CBC, Police and The Quadrant Shopping Centre to look at ways to tackle this anti-social behaviour.

Members were informed that it was anticipated that the Dunstable Leisure Centre would be re-opened in the winter of 2018.

Concern was raised about notices on abandoned vehicles and whether this was compliant with current guidance and regulations.

ACTION: The Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support to check the current regulations and guidance.

It was noted that the number of young people not in education, employment or training in the area was still at the lowest ever level.

Members were reminded that the Cheering Volunteering Awards would be taking place on Tuesday 6 June at the Grove Theatre.

16. REPORTS FROM CO-OPTED OR OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman thanked Hugh Garrod of Promoting Dunstable and Ann Sparrow of Dunstable In Bloom for submitting written reports in advance of the meeting that meant they were able to be sent out with the agenda.

It was confirmed that Keep Dunstable Tidy litter picks were promoted using leaflets and posters in the area that was being targeted and Sharon Warboys offered assistance to publicise the information. It was explained that the hope was that self-generating groups would eventually emerge.

The In Bloom campaign was waiting on news regarding works on the A5 in the town centre, post detrunking as this may affect elements of the campaign for 2017.

ACTION: Town Centre Manager to put the Reports from co-opted or outside bodies earlier on the agenda for future meetings.

17. DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Committee reviewed the Dunstable Joint Committee Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED: that the Risk Assessment and control measures be approved.

18. MARKET TOWN REGENERATION FUND (MTRF)

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave a verbal update on progress with Dunstable Town Council's MTRF projects as follows:

- Town Centre Ranger Scheme was up and running.
- Bennett's Splash (Splash Park) contractors were onsite and on schedule and looking at a mid-June completion and late June opening.
- Priory House Feasibility Interim Report had been received.
- A design for the Priory Gardens entrance feature was about to be commissioned.
- A future meeting would be held with the Quadrant regarding the toilets.
- Planning for phase 2 of the architectural lighting was awaited.

An update on the High Street Improvement Scheme was also given with 12 businesses going through the final review stage to date.

KEEP DUNSTABLE TIDY

The last meeting of KDT was held in Grove House on Monday 22nd June at 7pm. Six people attended, three of them new to KDT. We outlined to them the story so far and encouraged them to talk about their Tidy concerns. The areas discussed were the Green Lanes, Maidenbower and the lanes leading to it, the rear of Christ Church near West Street, Bowmans Way and Oakwood Avenue. The Christ Church congregation has House Groups all over Dunstable, some of which might be interested in KDT. I outlined how KDT can co-ordinate local initiatives and supply them with litter pickers, bags, gloves, hi-viz jackets etc. DTC/CBC would arrange the collection of bagged waste. The next KDT meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th August, at which dates will be set for KDT activities.

Hugh Garrod

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE****THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2017****DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN UPDATE****Purpose of report: -** For Information and to agree expenditure for the Christmas Programme 2017**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That Members of the Committee note progress to date with the implementation of the agreed action plan for 2017/18 and approve funding for the Christmas programme for 2017.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members are reminded that at the last meeting of this Committee, the following priorities were agreed for funding from the 2017/18 budget.

Suggested Initiative	Comments	Cost
TCMC performance measures	Annual footfall survey to take place the first weekend in March 2018.	£650
Christmas Promotions	To create and promote a programme of Christmas promotions (ice rink/lighting finale for Torchlight event).	£15,000
War Memorial Refurbishment	Contribution towards the refurbishments of the War memorial in Priory Gardens (to refurbish the paved area and add a commemorative Combined Armed Services plaque/carving).	£2,000
Big Lunch 2017	Big Lunch event for over 65s in Grove House Gardens, aimed at the socially isolated. 6 June 2017. Funding requested for the lunch element of the event.	£500
Middle Row Lighting	To fund additional lighting under the CBC canopy in Middle Row.	£3,000
Total:		<u>£21,150</u>

(Members are reminded that there is an additional £2,000 allocated as a contingency for signage improvements (Dunstable Joint Committee Minute 13, 12 July 2012) and funds allocated for ongoing projects from previous years' budgets such as the Shop Front Accreditation Scheme).

2.2 Budget update

It is anticipated that the Committee will have the following revised financial resources available for 2017/18, subject to confirmation and excluding projects already prioritised by the Committee:

£12,271.32	Anticipated Underspend and unallocated funds from 2016/2017 budget
£ 5,000.00	Dunstable Town Council contribution (town centre marketing budget)
£ 11,412.13	ASDA Section 106 funding contribution following adoption of the Committee Terms of Reference*
<u>£ 28,683.45</u>	Estimated Budget available for 2017/18
<u>-£21,150.00</u>	Funding for prioritised projects/initiatives in 2017/18

£ 7,533.45 Anticipated remaining available funds for 2017/18

**The Asda Section 106 funding contribution for 2017/18 is subject to confirmation and expenditure of these funds is contingent on their receipt.*

- 2.3 Following the last meeting of the Committee, the Action Plan has been refreshed and is attached at appendix 1. Further detail on some of the ongoing actions is given below at report item 3.

3. UPDATE ON TOWN ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES

3.1 The Big Lunch

- 3.1.1 The Eden Project started the 'Big Lunch' in 2009 to encourage people to come out of their homes and get to know their neighbours. The idea was to help people feel more of a connection through a fun activity and develop a sense of community.
- 3.1.2 The first Big Lunch hosted by Dunstable Town Council went ahead as planned on Tuesday 6 June in Grove House Gardens and was targeted at residents over the age of 65 with an aim to not only provide a fun social activity for participants but to provide information which may be of benefit to those attending.
- 3.1.3 The event was held in a marquee on the lawn in Grove House Gardens, starting at 11.30 am and finishing at approximately 2.30 pm. Despite the pouring rain and 30 mph gusts of wind, 80 people braved the elements and turned up for a great event, the maximum capacity was for 100 people.
- 3.1.4 A picnic lunch was served, provided by a local business and it was this element that was funded by the Dunstable Joint Committee. Musical entertainment and a close up magician was provided.

- 3.1.5 Dunstable Town Council Officers were supported by 7 Signpost volunteers. They went above and beyond to ensure those attending had the best time possible and got back to their transport safely. Local businesses were also very supportive and a total number of 27 raffle prizes were awarded at the event.
- 3.1.6 A total of 15 different organisations provided useful information for attendees including the Disability Resource Centre, Contact the Elderly, Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Fire Service, Amplifon, Age UK, POWHER, Carers Support and the Independent Living Team from Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 3.1.7 A number of thank you cards and letters have been received along with very positive comments on facebook, email and via the telephone.

3.2 Synthetic Ice Rink

- 3.2.1 Quotations were sought from a total of 8 synthetic rink providers. Based on the 2016 attraction, companies were asked to quote to provide a rink holding approximately 35 skaters to be located on The Square from Friday 15 December to Thursday 21 December 2017. Hours of operation were requested as 10.00 am to 4.00 pm each day with an additional evening opening until 8.00 pm on Friday 15 December. Companies were asked to quote for a turn-key service including staffing, cash/ticket taking, security and the levelling of the rink as The Square is sloped. Companies were also asked what additional equipment they could provide that would enhance the attraction.
- 3.2.2 Of the 8 companies, 6 were able to supply a rink for the dates given. Initial quotations came in between £8,000 and £15,500. However, each quote differed in terms of staffing, security and enhancements to the rink. It is also worth noting that only one company has so far visited site free of charge (excluding the provider from 2016 who is familiar with the site). It appears to be standard practice for a number of providers to visit at a fee and then take the fee from the total invoice if booked. However, officers have concerns that once a site visit has been undertaken, the quotes will rise in order for the providers to level the rink. Based on last year this could be in the region of £1,000.
- 3.2.3 Having examined the quotations in detail and gone back to a number of the providers with questions, officers would therefore recommend that £10,000 of the £15,000 agreed for the Christmas programme be set aside for the provision of the rink.
- 3.2.4 Should there be any underspend, this will be used for promotion of the attraction. Any funds from ticket sales will go back into the Dunstable Joint Committee budget for 2017/18.

3.3 Lighting Finale to the Christmas Tree Carols and Torchlight Procession

- 3.3.1 The 2016 Christmas Tree Carols and Torchlight Procession included a lighting finale funded by the Dunstable Joint Committee

- 3.3.2 To date officers have gone out to two companies for quotations and will seek further quotations over the coming weeks.
- 3.3.3 Based on the event last year, it is anticipated that the cost of a lighting finale will be in the region of £6,500. It is therefore suggested that £5,000 of the £15,000 Christmas programme budget be allocated for the event finale and a further £1,500 be allocated from the remaining Dunstable Joint Committee Budget for 2017/18.

Members' views are requested.

3.4 Christmas in Dunstable Promotional Leaflet

- 3.4.1 In 2016 a Christmas in Dunstable leaflet was produced in order to promote the Christmas programme provided by Dunstable Town Council and the Dunstable Joint Committee but also including activities by local organisations and businesses.
- 3.4.2 At Members' request, costs have been sought to produce another leaflet for 2017 encompassing all the above and the activities detailed in the Christmas Action Plan at Appendix 2.
- 3.4.3 To produce 20,000 A6 bi-fold leaflets £1,242 plus VAT, including design and fold. To distribute 16,000 leaflets to each household in Dunstable will cost £1,024 plus VAT. Remaining leaflets will be distributed in public buildings in the Dunstable Town Council leaflet stands and in the town centre.
- 3.4.4 It is requested that the Dunstable Joint Committee allocate £2,266 in order to fund the design, production and distribution of this leaflet for Christmas 2017.

Members' views are requested. Should the additional expenditure suggested at 3.3.3 and 3.4.4 be agreed, £18,766 would be allocated in total for the Christmas programme and a total of £24,916 for 2017/18 priorities. This would leave the Dunstable Joint Committee with a contingency of £3,767.45 remaining from the 2017/18 budget.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 These are inherent to this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Dunstable Joint Committee Action Plan June 2017/18

Appendix 2 - Christmas 2017 Action Plan

6. AUTHOR

- 6.1 Clare Brett – Town Centre Manager
E-mail – clare.brett@dunstable.gov.uk

Action	Progress	Responsible Officer/Authority	Funding	Budget update
Additional lighting in Middle Row	Update to be provided by CBC.	CBC	£3,000 DJC 17/18 Budget	N/A
Refurbishment of the Dunstable War Memorial	A Working Group has been formed from DTC Grounds and Environmental Services Committee along with representatives of partner organisations and the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services. The Working Group is scheduled to meet week commencing 26 June 17 and will prepare a brief for the improvement of the war memorial. Members will be kept updated.	Friends of Priory House and Gardens/DTC	£2,000 DJC 17/18 Budget and external funding.	N/A
Christmas Promotions	A separate Action Plan for the Christmas promotions has been drafted and is at appendix 2. Further information is provided at report items 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4.	Town Centre Manager/Events & Marketing Officer, DTC	£15,000 DJC Budget 17/18	N/A
The Big Lunch	The event took place as scheduled on 6 July 2017. A total of 85 over 65s attended, despite inclement weather. Further information is provided at report item 3.1.	Youth and Community Manager DTC	£500 DJC plus DTC Budget and external funding.	£500 transferred to DTC.
Annual Footfall Survey	The annual survey has been booked to take place over the first weekend in March 2018.	Town Centre Manager DTC	£650 DJC Budget	Order raised
Marketing/Banners/Flags	Funds have been set aside by the Committee to refurbish the existing banners in Court Drive and to investigate extending the scheme into other areas of the town centre. This will be investigated further in conjunction with works on the A5, post detrunking.	DTC/CBC	£1,500 DJC 16/17 Budget	£1,500 allocated
Shop Front Accreditation Scheme	Applications have been distributed amongst town centre shops and the scheme is being promoted on the DTC website, social media and via the Town Centre Manager's column and Blog. The deadline for applications is Friday 30 June and the judging will take place in July. To date 12 businesses have signed up to take part in the scheme.	Town Centre Manager DTC	£1,000 DJC 16/17 Budget	Expenditure will be dependent on the number of applicants taking part.

Action	Deadline	Progress/Notes	Responsible Officer/Authority	Funding	Budget update
Facilitate the provision of a synthetic ice Rink.	Ice rink to be booked by end July.	8 ice rink companies have been asked to quote to provide the ice rink for one week from Friday 15 to Thursday 21 December. Further information is given at report item xxx	Town Centre Manager/Events & Marketing Officer DTC	£10,000 DJC Budget 2017/18	N/A
Christmas Tree Carols and Torchlight Procession	Invites to schools and choirs to be sent out September.	Annual event to take place on Friday 1 December 7.00 pm, Priory Church and The Square.	Events & Marketing Officer DTC	£3,000 DTC Events/Torchlight Budget	
Facilitate the provision of a lighting finale to the Christmas Tree carols and Torchlight Event.	Quotes to come in by end of July and decision to be taken on provider by end August.	DTC Officers have to date approached two companies including the provider for 2016 to quote for the light show finale for this year. Officers will approach more companies over the next few weeks with a view to securing a provider by end August. Based on last years event, is anticipated that costs will be in the region of £6,500.	Town Centre Manager/Events & Marketing Officer DTC	£6,500 DJC 17/18	N/A
Co-ordinate a Christmas in Dunstable promotional leaflet.	Leaflet to be distributed from beginning November 17. Copy deadline end October to allow for design.	Costs have been sought for 20,000 copies of Christmas in Dunstable leaflet with a distribution of 17,000 to go out in November. Additional funds are requested to produce the leaflet.	Town Centre Manager/Events Officer DTC	£2,286 DJC Budget 2017/18	N/A
Hold a Christmas Themed Market as part of the programme of Themed markets for 2017.	The Themed Market will take place on Saturday 9 December 2017. Deadline for stalls Wednesday 6 December 17.	The Christmas Themed Market will take place on Saturday 9 December 2017 alongside the general, outdoor market. The Themed Market is the last in the programme that began in April and trading will take place in the Ashton Square area between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm. The market is being promoted along with the rest of the programme. Four stalls have already been booked in for the December event and bookings will be taken up until the Wednesday before the event. There will also be a Creative Craft Market on the following Saturday 16 December, that will coincide with the Synthetic Ice Rink.	Town Centre Manager/Market Officer DTC	£2,500 DTC Market Marketing Budget 17/18 (budget is for all market marketing)	Event is being promoted using the market marketing budget throughout the year.

Mistletoe Magic	Reindeer and grotto have been booked.	Priory House event running for the second year. Event will take place Saturday 9 December, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm and will include real reindeer, Grotto and arts and crafts activities. Christmas Afternoon Teas will be available and Christmas hampers.	Priory House Manager	£2,200 DTC Priory House Events Budget	Reindeer and grotto have been booked.
Residents/Businesses Christmas Lighting Competition	Publicity to be distributed October/November ; December judging	Competitions from 2016 to be built on and more businesses/residents to be encouraged to take part. 1/2 page Talk of the Town ad for the winning business and town centre vouchers for the winning resident.	Town Centre Manager	£100 DTC Town Centre Budget	N/A

DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE**22 June 2017****CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE**

Purpose of report: - For Information

1. **COMMUNITY SAFETY (No updates. April – June data to be included in next report)**

2. **REGENERATION & BUSINESS**

BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT UPDATE

2.1 **M1/A5 & Woodside Link**

Both the M1/A5 and Woodside Link roads have opened to the public in the last couple of months. These roads will open up a multi-billion investment in the form of jobs, housing and growth. The Woodside Link road was built as a result of an estimated £38.3m investment from Central Bedfordshire Council, SEMLEP, the government; and planning gain. The A5/M1 link cost an estimated £162m, from which £5m was funded by Central Bedfordshire Council, and £45m was brokered from local developers by the council. The delivery of these multi-million pound infrastructure projects have been achieved through Central Bedfordshire's effective partnership with Highways England. These are strategically important pieces of infrastructure in the South East Midlands area. They are already improving the traffic and environmental issues in the town centre, and further benefits will occur once the de-trunking and area-wide HGV weight limits are in place.

2.2 **Dunstable High Street**

The critical task is to now deliver the much-needed improvements to the high street; focusing on Dunstable's heritage and place qualities, such as access, character, signage, layout and movement around the town. Ringway Jacob has been commissioned to produce initial designs, prior to going out to public consultation this autumn.

We are planning urgent works, such as de-cluttering, signage and removal of the railings in the high street. We will publicise the timings and traffic management plans to reduce short term disruption in due course. The renewal of Dunstable High Street is an important and critical project, which we will design and deliver with the community. The total project is estimated to cost £8m, which means we have a funded gap of roughly £5m. We will be investigating these costs in more detail during the design work, and will also identify ways to fill the funding gap.

Aside from the transport project, there are other projects that form our holistic approach to regenerating Dunstable town centre. We continue to work alongside Dunstable Town Council to deliver the Market Town Regeneration Fund Project, which is worth £1.25 million and is already producing tangible results. There is also the High Street Improvement Scheme where Central Bedfordshire Council is providing grant funding for shop owners. In Dunstable we have received 14 expressions of interest (£510,000), of which two shops have been approved at full application (£32,000 gross). The approved expressions of interest are making their way to a full application and this project in totality will mark a step change in Dunstable's streetscape.

2.3 Council owned-projects

As noted in previous updates, we are working on a strategy to deliver town centre development projects which will create a place for the future as well as sustainable services in Dunstable town centre. There are priorities in the town, including Dunstable High Street and the renewed Dunstable Leisure Centre. We are also reviewing ways to increase our capital generation, as well as delivering our priorities in the town, such as increasing the town's competitiveness, new healthcare, new housing and public realm improvements. We will consult council members when these proposals have been finalised, before moving towards a decision in principle to go forward with the delivery.

2.4 Town Centre Developments

As you will see, Dunstable Leisure Centre redevelopment for creating a new state-of-the-art facility is now underway. This is very much a flagship regeneration project in the town.

Private developments are making good progress in the town, including:

- College Housing Site: 32 units remaining, completion in 2017-2018
- Ashton Middle School: 113 units built in 2017-2020
- Dukeminster: 170 units delivered in 2018-2022
- Linpac Site: 100 units delivered in 2018-2020
- Croft Green: 23 units for sheltered housing (100% affordable)

These developments alone will produce 438 homes close to the town centre in the period up to 2022, which will produce economic, social and environmental benefits for the town centre.

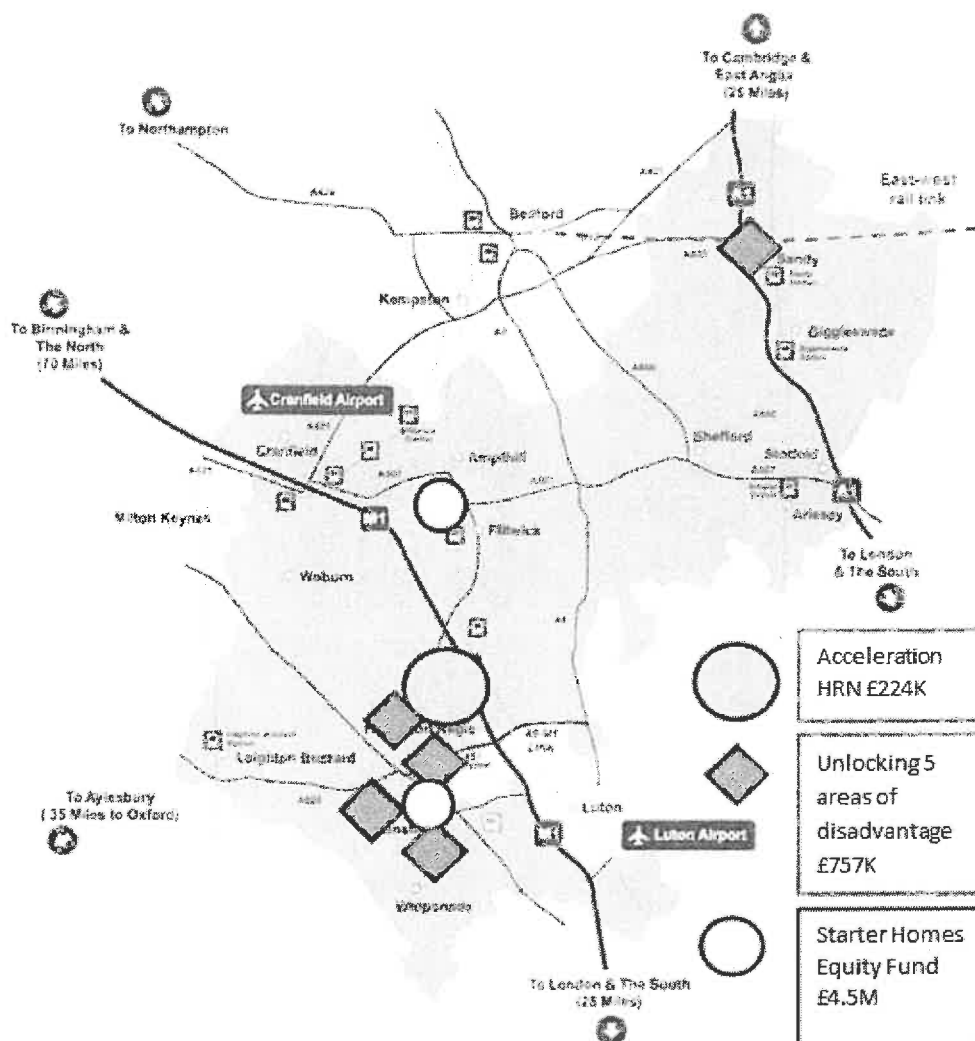
2.5 Local Plan

Central Bedfordshire's draft Local Plan will go to Executive Committee on 20 June and a public consultation will begin on 4 July.

2.6 Unlocking Housing Growth

The Regeneration and Business Directorate have been working collaboratively across the organisation and with DCLG and HCA to unlock stalled sites, accelerate delivery of housing and employment land, and related infrastructure across Central Bedfordshire, in council owned sites and other public and private sector sites. Grants up to £5.5M have been available to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Our teams have successfully bid for funding from two streams of grant to add to the Starter Homes support we have already been offered. The focus of the funding is to unlock growth opportunities in our most disadvantaged areas, bring housing growth forward at pace, support innovative and new approaches to housing development, connect existing communities with new communities and create modern town centres and high streets, pro-actively place making our key economic centres.



Fund	Amount	Area/s	Deliverables	Timeline
Large Site Acceleration HCA Grant	£224K	HRN 1 Kingsland	Technical reports Feasibility studies Housing starts at HRN Housing starts at Kingsland	April 2017 to March 2020.
Estate Regeneration DCLG Grant	£757k	Houghton Regis Dunstable Sandy	Technical reports Community engagement Capacity building Masterplanning Financial viability assessments	April 2017 to March 2020
Starter Homes HCA	£4.5M subject to contract	Flitwick Dunstable	Starter Homes	April 2017 to March 2020

2.7 Business Support update

Inward Investment and Business Growth

At Central Bedfordshire Council, we are working with businesses in the area to facilitate their growth and assist them to overcome any barriers they may be facing. In order to create an

environment where businesses can prosper and grow, the Council is investing in a range of business support, infrastructure, developments and regeneration.

Latest infrastructure developments include the recently opened Woodside Link road and the A5-M1 Link, both of which will benefit local businesses and residents with improved road systems. We have an ongoing communications campaign to raise awareness of the new road system and we will also be sending out an informative leaflet to businesses. Officers are visiting local businesses and are available to explain the changes to the roads and the new weight limits to local businesses to help them to get the best out of the new road networks. For information on the weight limits, please see: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/weightlimits.

Please contact Tim.Oxley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk if you would like to discuss how your business can best operate the new road systems. For further information on the A5-M1 please see: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/business/developments/dunstable-masterplan/woodside-link-road-opens.aspx>

Our Officers are available to support every business within the local area and are available to meet with and discuss how we can assist businesses to overcome barriers and grow. We offer support with premises, recruitment, skills, procurement opportunities, marketing and we are well connected to local partners that can further support businesses. In the last year, a total of 147 businesses in Central Bedfordshire have been supported, 24 of which were based in Dunstable.

Our Let's Talk Business e-newsletter currently has 5833 signed up and is growing with every edition.

Over the last 12 months the Business Support and Growth Fund has made 8 awards to businesses to reduce their business rates. Three of these were in the Houghton Regis/Dunstable area with awards totalling £11,000 which resulted £50,000 of new investment coming into the area and will create up to 20 new jobs. The scheme has been extended to run throughout 17/18.

It has been another record year for Inward Investment with a total of 190 enquiries, 81 of which showed interest in the Houghton Regis and Dunstable area. We have reported 9 companies moving into the area, namely: Steico, Sports Traider, Crepe Cottage, Deakin-White Estate Agents, Team Sport Go Karting, 4PX, Innovative Bites, Amazon into DC2 and Kombimatec, bringing almost 700 jobs in a year. For the whole of Central Bedfordshire, there have been 18 new companies or expansions, bringing approx. 1000 new jobs. The Council's Property Market Review (PMR) gives a round up of the commercial property and developments opportunities in Central Bedfordshire. [http://www.becentralbedfordshire.co.uk/Property and Development](http://www.becentralbedfordshire.co.uk/Property_and_Development)

High Street Vacancy Levels

The Council monitors the level of high street vacancies in 'A' class premises in Central Bedfordshire's town centres.

According to Springboard, the national town centre vacancy rate was 9.3% in April 2017, down from 9.4% in January 2017. This is largely due to sharp declines in Greater London and the East, the high street vacancy rates in all other nations / regions having risen in April. The national Retail Sales Index shows a decrease in sales of 1.4% in the 3 months to March 2017, the third consecutive monthly decrease, but the first quarterly decline since 2013. This decline seems to be due to price increases across a whole range of sectors.

This national decline does not currently appear to be reflected in the number of vacant units across Central Bedfordshire, whose rate remains consistent with previous quarters. The overall average vacancy rate across Central Bedfordshire town centres in May 2017, 4.31%, has improved slightly from February's 5.06%. This decrease is due to fewer vacant units in Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard and Stotfold with one new overall vacant unit seen in both Biggleswade and Dunstable.

Table 6: Town centre vacancies % in Central Bedfordshire, May 2016 – May 2017

Town	May 16	Aug 16	Nov 16	Feb 17	May 17
Amphill	0	1.1	0	2.2	2.2
Arlesey	6.7	6.7	0	0	0
Biggleswade	7.6	6.9	4.8	7.6	8.3
Dunstable	18.8	15.4	15.4	13.4	13.8
Flitwick	0	0	0	0	0
Houghton Regis	3.4	3.4	3.4	6.9	3.4
Leighton Buzzard	6.9	6.4	4.9	4.9	3.9
Sandy	6	4.5	7.5	7.5	9
Shefford	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Stotfold	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	0
Average vacancy rate	5.75%	5.25%	4.41%	5.06%	4.31%

Source: Central Bedfordshire Council May 2017

Employment and Skills

Using money from the Skills Funding Agency, the Bedfordshire Employment & Skills Service commissions a wide range of courses designed to assist local residents gain employment. The courses are delivered in local communities and range from short 'Step Into' courses where participants can learn more about the skills and requirements of specific jobs i.e. warehousing, customer service & retail, through to longer accredited courses including IT skills, Maths, English and general employability. We also have some specialist niche provision from Impact Mental Health Peer Support for overcoming the barriers faced by participants who have mild to moderate mental health needs which continues to be well received. Additionally Noah Enterprises deliver a range of courses which are aimed at those who are further from the labour market (because of recovering from addictions and homelessness). Work Clubs continue to be provided at the Library.

Further details are available at the BESS webpages on the Council's website
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/jobs/adult-learning/landing.aspx>

2.8 Market Town Regeneration Fund MTRF

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) continues to work in partnership with Dunstable Town Council on its MTRF project and its engagement with the High Street Improvement Scheme (HSIS). Within the HSIS, 15 businesses from Dunstable are going through the review stage of their full applications, and will be scored by a CBC and Dunstable Town Council panel. In the final round for Expression of Interests, 3 further businesses have come forward (Moore's building High Street South, 5 High Street South and Barnet Fayre) and will be reviewed by the Panel. The tender for the building contractor has now been completed (subject to references).

3. LEISURE, LIBRARIES & COUNTRYSIDE

3.1 DUNSTABLE LEISURE CENTRE: PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS AROUND CLOSURE

The old centre will close to the public at 9pm on 4th June 2017 and following a week of decommissioning we will hand the site over to our main contractor, Wates, on 12th June. At the end of May there will be a minor road layout change to the access roads off the highway outside the centre.

From 12th June there will be a period of approximately 6 weeks which will see the site secured; deliveries for temporary welfare units, skips and scaffolding, and archaeological investigations. This will be followed by a period of demolition before the site starts to be redeveloped.

Initially construction site access will be from the front of the building, upon completion of the demolition phase access will be from the rear of the property next to The Grove service yard entrance. Only one entrance will be in operation at any time and vehicle movements will be supervised by a banksman. Vehicle cleaning and dust control measures will be in place. Noise levels will be controlled and monitored. CCTV site security will be installed.

Vehicle and pedestrian access to properties will be maintained at all times.

Deliveries will be via Church Street, Boscombe Road and College Drive. There will be measures in place to limit waiting times and to restrict delivery times.

Dunstable Library and the Citizen's Advice Service, which will be relocated into the redeveloped Dunstable Leisure Centre, will remain open during the redevelopment period and will move across to the new building once completed. Moving these services at that time will require a short closure period.

Our leisure centres in Houghton Regis and Tiddenfoot (Leighton Buzzard) have been identified as the primary alternative destinations for Dunstable Leisure Centre customers, with swimming, gym and group exercise available at both locations. Customers, clubs and schools have all been supported to find alternative provision during the closure period. There has been a high take up of the alternative bowling offer we have made available for indoor bowlers.

You can find out more at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/DLC.

3.2 ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Up coming events at Dunstable Downs: -

DATE	ACTIVITY
24 Jun 2017	Ranger Lead Orchid and Nature Walk - Enjoy a 2 hour walk to look for the creatures that call Dunstable Downs home. Hopefully the orchids will be in full bloom.
25 Jun 2017	Open Air Service and Sunday Picnic - Open-Air Service by the Methodist

	Church at Dunstable Downs.
02 Jul 2017	Eid-al-Fitr Festival, Dunstable Downs; everyone welcome

For more information about these and other events please visit <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/countryside-sites/south.aspx> and follow links to the National Trust.

3.3 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The weekly activity session at Priory View continues to attract good numbers with around 15-20 participants per week. In May the session, that includes chair based exercise, new age curling and boccia, was featured on BBC Look East. The sessions are open to non-residents and take place every Thursday 2-3pm and cost £2 per week (no booking required). You can find details of all local classes on the website at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure/physical-activity/over-50s.aspx>

The Walking for Health sessions currently taking place from Dunstable Leisure Centre will continue to operate after the centre closes and will instead start and finish from The Grove Theatre. Day, time and walk leaders will remain unchanged (Tuesday 10.30am). See more details at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure/physical-activity/walk-4-health.aspx>

The Active Lifestyles team are continuing to co-ordinate exercise referral opportunities across Central Bedfordshire. With the closure of Dunstable Leisure Centre and Lifestyle Hub, Officers are advising Local GP surgeries and other health services that a local referral offer continues to be available in Dunstable with one to one assessments now taking place at Dunstable Library. For more information, contact the team at physical.activity@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

4. HIGHWAYS

PARKING AND ENFORCEMENT

Penalty Charge Notices issued in last 3 months in Dunstable:

March – 342

April – 363

May – 314

Visits made to Dunstable March to May – 2460.

The following works have been put forward for completion:

Dorchester Close, Dunstable. Top end o/s flats and near lamp post no 4 Double Yellow Lines need repainting, very faded/missing.

High St North, Dunstable. O/S Ivory Lounge/Papa Johns and Subway: Disabled Bays and Taxi Bays lines and wording needs repainting.

West Street, Dunstable. Opp Matthew St/near St Mary's gate, C/P Bays and lines inside taxi only area need repainting.

Worthington Rd Dunstable near shops opposite lamp post no 2. Single Yellow Line sign no waiting 7am-7pm needs replacing, old one very faded.

5. WASTE

Bin hangers were placed on all bins earlier in May to remind residents of the separate recycling collection of small electricals, reusable textiles and batteries placed in separate carrier bags for each waste type by the side of either wheelie bin on collection day. The scheme includes small electrical items such as toasters, kettles and hairdryers, but excluding PC screens, laptops and TVs. Household batteries are accepted excluding those from any vehicles or ride on toys. Textiles and shoes should be of reusable quality and exclude cushions, pillows and duvets. More information is available on the Council's website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/recycling and social media.

6. SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING

6.1 Greenacres Residential Care Home

On April 4th 2017, Housing Services formally acquired the Greenacres Care Home on Brewer's Hill Road in Dunstable, which was formerly used by older people needing residential care. The Council is currently undertaking repair works to bring the accommodation up to standard to increase its housing options for those who approach the service for urgent housing assistance. This will ease the financial pressure on the Council who at times have to use more expensive private accommodation when there is no suitable council accommodation available.

The scheme will start being occupied on a phased basis over the summer months.

6.2 Dunstable Employment Support

A significant Jobs Fair and Employment support event was delivered by Housing Services Tenant Participation Team on 22 February 2017. Supported by Job Centre Plus the public event at Methodist Church Hall on Ashton Square provided 38 tables hosted by local organisations and businesses promoting their vacancies or training opportunities. On the day there were in excess of 300 attendees and feedback indicated that 84 people were offered interviews or further contact with employers as a result of attending the event, and the training organisations took over 700 names.

A smaller event was delivered at the Downside Children's centre on 11 May 2017 which attracted 12 local organisations and was well attended by local residents including those who dropped in whilst doing school collection. Further events are being planned that enable local residents to more easily access training providers and meet employers.

We actively supported the BESS Employment and Skills service, securing attendees for the Food Hygiene and First Aid training courses, and delivered another 'Inspire' Employment Support training programme, providing significant one-2-one support and training for people seeking employment after a long break.

7. SCHOOLS (no update from previous report)

8. YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

Update on NEETs within the wider Central Bedfordshire area

Out of the total Central Bedfordshire school year 12-13 cohort of 5752 young people at the end of April 2017, there were 110 (1.9%) reported to have a NEET status and 5472 (95%) recorded

as being in 'Education, Employment or Training' (EET). The proportion of young people still 'In Learning' was 95.4% for the year 12 cohort and 90.3% for the year 13 cohort, therefore an average of 92.8% are actively participating in an education or training activity.

There are a total of 169 (2.9%) young people living in Central Bedfordshire whose current situation is not known.

NEET Overview for Dunstable

At the start of May 2017 there were 30 young persons with a recorded NEET destination, which is a slight increase from 27 young people at the end of March.

The overall % proportion of the Dunstable population aged school years 12-13 who are currently NEET is currently 3.6%.

Dunstable Headline Figures for May 2017		
Total YPs in area	841	100%
EET	793	94.3%
NEET	30	3.6%
Unknown	18	2.2%

Characteristics of the NEET Group in Dunstable:

The following information provides an overview of the characteristics of the current NEET group in relation to young people aged 16-18 (*school years 12-13*). Where relevant, the tables include the figures for two other areas enabling a comparison to be made if required.

(1) Area

Area

The Dunstable-Central ward remains the only ward in Central Bedfordshire having a zero total for the number of recorded NEET young people. Dunstable-Northfields still has the highest number of NEET young people living in its area at 10 young people.

The following table gives a break down of the NEETs recorded as living within each ward during May 2017.

Ward	Cohort	NEET	%
Dunstable-Central	87	0	0%
Dunstable-Icknield	175	7	4%
Dunstable-Manshead	136	9	6.7%
Dunstable-Northfields	233	10	4.3%
Dunstable-Watling	210	4	2%

(2) Gender

The gender breakdown of the Dunstable area shows that it is the young females who are more likely to be NEET (18 : 60%) than the young males (12 : 40%).

Gender	Houghton Regis		Dunstable		Leighton Buzzard	
Male	4	33.4%	12	40.0%	8	47.1%

Female	8	66.7%	18	60.0%	9	53.0%
Total	12		30		17	

(3) Age

The age breakdown indicates that it is the 18 year olds that are most likely to be NEET within Dunstable area.

Actual Age (Year 12 & 13)	Houghton Regis		Dunstable		Leighton Buzzard	
16	1	8.4%	8	26.7%	2	11.8%
17	9	75.0%	10	33.4%	12	70.6%
18	2	16.7%	12	40.0%	3	17.7%
Total	12		30		17	

(4) Time

There is still a general peak in numbers for the 'less than 3 months' category.

Length of Time NEET	Houghton Regis		Dunstable		Leighton Buzzard	
Less than 3 months	4	33.4%	12	40.0%	3	17.7%
3 - 6 months	7	58.4%	9	30.0%	6	35.3%
6+ months	1	8.4%	9	30.0%	8	47.1%
Total	12		30		17	

(5) NEET Status

The number of young people within the Dunstable NEET group currently available to the labour market and actively seeking EET is 20 (66.6% of the NEET cohort of this area) compared to the 10 (33.3 % of the NEET cohort of this area) who are currently not available for EET due to their personal circumstances (e.g. Illness, pregnancy, etc.).

Status	Houghton Regis		Dunstable		Leighton Buzzard	
Seeking Employment or Training	8	66.6%	20	66.6%	12	70.5%
Unable to work due to 'Personal Circumstances'	4	33.3%	10	33.3%	5	29.4%
Total	12		30		17	

(6) Unknown Destinations

There are currently 18 young people in the area have a recorded destination of 'Unknown'. Whilst none of these young people were reported to have left the area, 12 could not be contacted using the information held by the service.

The percentages allow comparisons to be made against each area's total population.

Unknown Destinations	Houghton Regis		Dunstable		Leighton Buzzard	
Refused Information	2	0.5%	2	0.3%	0	0.0%
Cannot be Contacted	11	2.5%	12	1.5%	16	1.9%
Unknown / Left Area	4	0.9%	4	0.5%	1	0.2%
Totals	17		18		17	

(7) Next Steps

There has been several NEET preventative measures taking place over the last few months and will continue into the future. These include:

- Youth workers and the 14-19 Partnership Officer visited all schools in the area to promote 'Apprenticeship week' and the vacancies currently available via a lunch time pop-up stall.
- The Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) group met and the majority of schools actively participated and shared resources and advice.
- The use of social media is still being used to notify any NEET young person in the area of opportunities as they are advertised. The Facebook page is updated on a daily basis with notifications pushed to participating young people concerning training and employment details.

9. LICENSING AND POLLUTION

Prestige Express, Dunstable – Appeal against decision of Licensing Sub-committee to refuse to allow licence to sell alcohol on 24/7 basis. The appeal hearing has been scheduled for Monday 14th August at Luton Magistrate's Court.

Unity Night Club, The Quadrant, Dunstable – we have seen publicity on Facebook advising that the opening night will be Saturday 10th June

Box U Fit, Katherine Drive, Dunstable – a fitness studio has set up apparently without planning permission for the necessary change of use, and is causing noise issues to neighbouring residential properties. After investigating the noise complaints further, the Pollution Team have served a noise abatement notice. Planning Enforcement are now involved in the matter and I believe are also looking to take action to deal with the unauthorised change of use.

10. PUBLIC HEALTH (nothing to update from previous report)

11. PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

11.1 Cheering Volunteering 2017

The third annual Cheering Volunteering awards and celebration event took place on Tuesday 6 June at the Grove Theatre in Dunstable during National Volunteers Week.

Having grown in success and popularity over the last two years, Cheering Volunteering is organised by the council, working in partnership with volunteer centres as part of Central Bedfordshire Together, to say thank you to those who give their time to help others.

The event was sponsored by Biffa, Aragon Housing, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, ProLogis and Jeakins Weir.

On the night seven awards were presented to volunteers and 14 grant awards were handed out to voluntary organisations to help grow more volunteering opportunities in Central Bedfordshire. Guests were joined by the Chairman of the Council and other local dignitaries in the celebration of volunteering.

We are already thinking about Cheering Volunteering 2018 so if you have any photos of local volunteers in action, please send them to:

Partnerships.CommunityEngagementTeam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk so that they can be included in the photo montage.