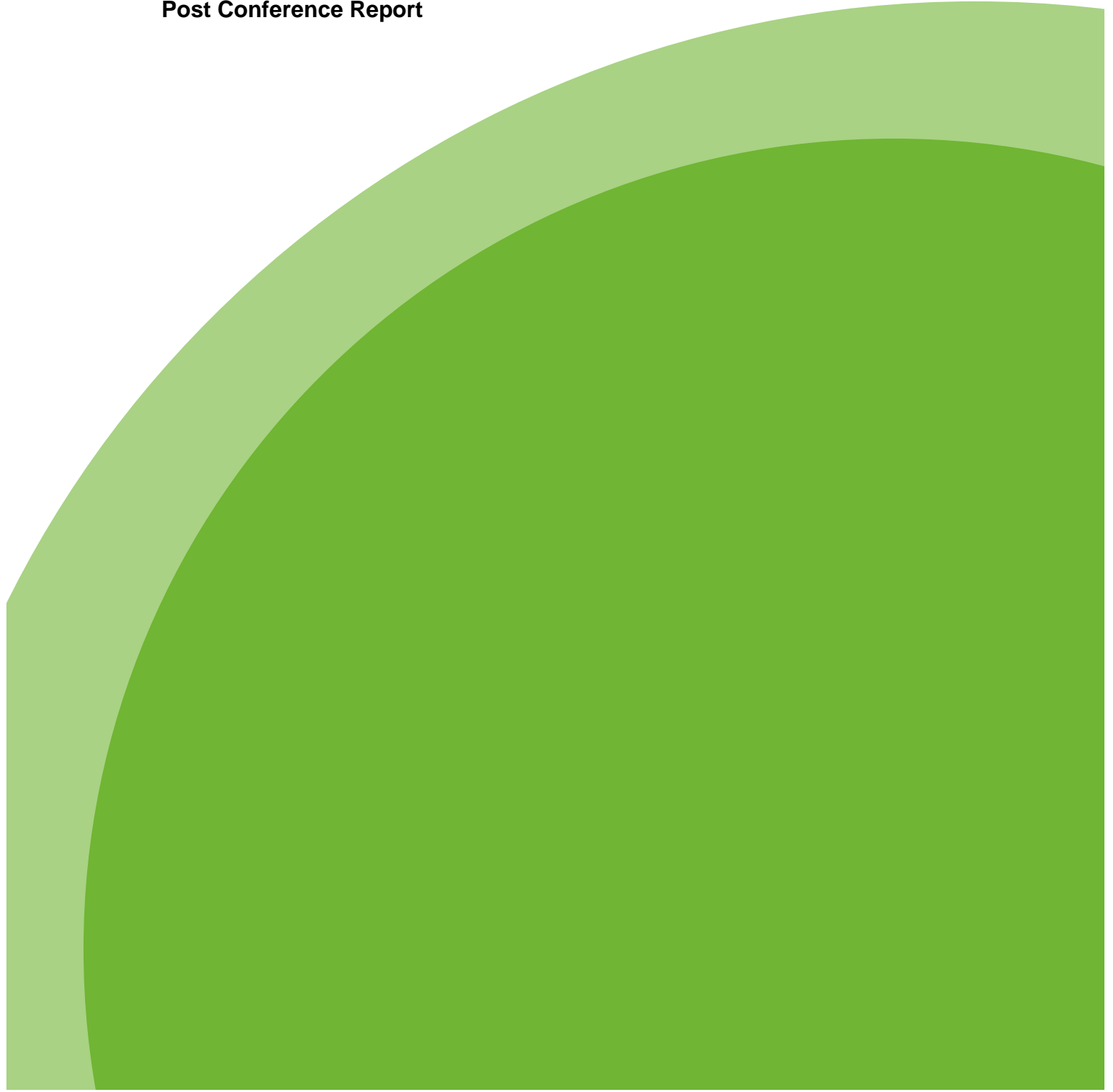




Town & Parish Council Conference

11 November 2015
Post Conference Report



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WELCOME

Thank you to everyone who attended our 19th Town & Parish Council Conference. I was delighted to welcome over 70 delegates, representing 32 parishes.

The topics covered in this conference included an update from Cllr Nigel Young, Executive Member, Regeneration about the Central Bedfordshire Local Development Plan and the timetable for neighbouring authorities to produce their Local Plans. We also took the opportunity to engage in early discussion with you on the preparation of the Passenger Transport Strategy and Parking Strategy. This included workshop discussions on your tables to gather your views and input. The Leader, Cllr James Jamieson, presented on the Five Year Plan and sought your views on the target areas for each priority; working together to inspire community identity and action.

Discussion was lively and lots of questions were asked. This report summarises the presentation and provides answers to all of the questions that were posed during the event and on the feedback sheets.



Councillor Andrew Turner

Executive Member, Stronger Communities,
Central Bedfordshire Council

INTRODUCTION

Local Development Plans

Cllr Nigel Young

Councillor Young set out the timetable for the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Local Plan production by neighbouring authorities. He emphasised the importance of engaging in the consultations; in particular the Luton Borough Council draft Local Plan, for which the deadline for response is 7th December, aiming for an adopted plan by October 2016.

The Milton Keynes consultation will be used to inform production of an Issues and Options Plan, and an adopted plan by mid 2017. Cllr Young encouraged those parishes bordering with Milton Keynes to respond. The deadline for which is after Christmas.

Bedford Borough Council is undertaking a consultation which will be used to inform their final draft plan, aiming for adoption by June 2018.

Lastly Aylesbury Vale District Council is also consulting on their Issues and Options Plan.

Following the Executive decision to withdraw the Development Strategy, scoping has begun on a new Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire, aiming for adoption in 2018. Cllr Young referred to a bespoke Engagement Plan and the intention to fully involve town and parish councils and communities in the process.

Cllr Young took feedback on how parishes wish to receive notice of planning applications in their parish. The majority wanted paper plans, and some parish councillors requested both electronic and paper copies.

Questions:

Q1. Regarding the electronic and paper copies of plans – the website said that until we have received these the council will send a summary document. I've not much faith in IT.

A1. The relevant Town/Parish Councils receive paper copies of planning applications, supporting documents and plans for consultation purposes at time of validation to enable them to comment upon them within the consultation period.

The Council recognises that some people may prefer to view paper copies and some Town/Parish Councils will not have facilities to be able to print large plans to the required scale.

The neighbour consultation document states “We have also sent a paper copy to your Parish/Town Council for their comments which may

be available for public viewing. Please contact the offices beforehand to ensure that the application is available for viewing”.

Planning applications are also available to view and comment online <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/default.aspx>

Q2. The situation with our greenbelt in the north of the county is in quite a bad state. Will the council be reviewing it and looking at it?

A2. Yes, the council is already at a very advanced stage.

Q3. Have you considered the 100s of acres used for Center Parcs up to the Milton Keynes boarder, all greenbelt – will we get any compensation for this?

A3. This is a reasonable request and compensatory greenbelt should be identified. We are a plan led society and under huge pressure from the government. We will support villages that haven't got a Neighbourhood Plan in place as we absolutely want to protect our greenbelt.

Q4. Can we think about greenbelt for environmental reasons; cultivated land should be set aside as there is concern that all the cutting back confines the area ability to feed itself.

A4. There is strictly limited development on open countryside and due regard is given to the landscape strategy.

Passenger Transport Strategy

Passenger Transport Strategy (PTS) - Susan Childerhouse

Su explained that the Passenger Transport strategy (PTS) is being developed as part of the Local Transport Plan. The aim is to deliver transport services that are safe, effective and fit for purpose and provide a framework for decision making processes for passenger transport. The strategy will refer to users of road based public transport, including commercially operated local bus routes, community transport, home to school fleet transport and home to day setting transport for vulnerable children and adults. The strategy will cover subsidised public transport, concessionary fares, community transport and home to school transport, including Safe Walking routes and fleet services.

Su encouraged delegates to participate in the strategy consultation which will begin in late February 2016 for a period of twelve weeks, whilst market research into the use of the transport is due to commence on 16th November.

Questions

Q5. What do you mean by community transport?

- A5. Voluntary car schemes, Dial-a-Ride operators, voluntary buses such as Ivel Sprinter. It's important to us to understand how it is used, what residents' preferences are, what is not well used and where the majority of demand is.
- Q6. Are you going to ask Link-a-Ride members?**
- A6. We will be looking at all transport providers and users of our own fleet, home to hospital etc.
- Q7. There are no buses on Sundays in Stotfold which is one of the principal days residents want to visit Lister Hospital. Apart from the 9.30am bus which runs Monday to Friday there are no direct buses, to Lister Hospital.**
- A7. This is why we are running the consultation; to look at these issues.
- Q8. Did Central Bedfordshire respond to Hertfordshire's consultation? If so, it hasn't worked!**
- A8. Yes, there has been a lot of cross border discussion. In the previous consultation of 2011/ 2012, residents were asked to prioritise categories of service if budgets were tight. Evenings and Sunday buses were lower priority. The new consultation would be an opportunity to seek an up to date opinion.
- Q9. We need to look further back and understand that it's not just about public transport – people are using their cars, and some have lots of cars. The problem we have is that people would like to use public transport to get to London from Flitwick, but there is nothing available to get back to Flitwick.**
- A9. We are looking at improving bus connections to Flitwick Station using Section 106 money. Continuation of the service would depend on public support for the bus service.
- Q10. We need to be proactive otherwise people will use cars.**
- A10. We want people to think about what is most sustainable for their communities. Bus services are promoted by the council or the operator, but their continuation does depend on public usage. There is far more bus information online and smart phones than previously.
- Q11. We have a problem with linkage in our parish. The bus leaves 5-10 minutes before trains leave the nearest town. It's a fact that buses disappear just before the trains come in. Also, it's not viable to expect 100% usage of public transport.**
- A11. The number of buses that can connect with trains at all stations is limited by resource. However we will discuss bus-train connectivity with operators.
- Q12. We have already made some suggestions to you about linkage and routes that need to be looked at.**
- A12. Under the 1985 Transport Act, bus companies can decide which routes to operate. These would be where there is highest passenger

usage, and are commercially viable. It is down to the authority to decide on filling any gaps.

Q13. There is a problem overall with public transport – we can get there but we can't get back. In one case, if we went to Milton Keynes, we'd have to stay there a whole week before we can use public transport to return. People need to come back from work, therefore public transport will not get used. More revenue needs to be invested in getting people back home. We need better longer bus services available and interlinked routes need to be put in place – for example the ½ hour busway service runs late, but we would like to request that it starts in Harlington.

A13. All shopping bus services to Milton Keynes have a return journey on the same day. As regards the Harlington suggestion, there was a mini bus service (Harlington Hopper) which ran through Tebworth and Toddington to Harlington Station at peak times. The number using this service was so bad with many journeys having no passengers.

Q14. The service was once a day, in the morning and if you missed it you were stuck. If we had the ability we would look to getting a minibus.

A14. Toddington has a once a week shopping bus to Milton Keynes, and CBC has continued to finance this. There is no proven demand for an increase in this service.

Q15. How much is the council spending on the transport strategy? Surely this would be better spent on infrastructure?

Q15. The consultation is going to cost £30k.

Q16. The Tebworth route was stopped, with no Sunday service. There is an ageing population in Toddington and lots need to get to Luton and Dunstable Hospital, but it's not possible as they can't always get out of the house. Also we've got the busway which is great, but it's a problem for those who are infirm and can't walk from busway to hospital; they would need to change 3 times. Why was Tebworth scrapped? There is no transport whatsoever.

A16. Toddington currently has its best ever bus service with a half hourly link to Luton, hourly link to Flitwick and Bedford, and once a week shopping buses to Milton Keynes and Hitchin. The 74 bus via Tebworth to Dunstable has been reduced to reflect actual usage. Over 3 consecutive Saturdays this bus has operated with no passengers. We have to make best use of public money. Passengers travelling from Toddington to the L&D Hospital have to change once in Houghton Regis.

Q17. People are no longer working standard hours. People work flexi time so the timetable doesn't work for them and they end up using cars. There isn't enough time given for these services to take off – how long does it take for people to realise the services are running? For example there is 1 bus in Brogborough, and

those staying in Cranfield Uni are subsidised but very few know about it.

A17. The council is using Section 106 funding to fund a once a day bus service to Bedford. This is advertised at a new bus stop which has been erected by CBC at the request of Brogborough Parish Council. Over the years the numbers of people using the bus service has gone down, and that is reflected in the level of bus service.

Q18. Will bus services be profitable in rural communities?

A18. The council is looking at providing services, and only looking at social need for some. We are looking around the country. Most local authorities are holding consultations on future public transport support. The Transport Act states that the council does not have to support bus services, but do have a due regard to the elderly and the infirm.

Q19. Regarding profitability – what is the effect of free bus passes?

A19. In the region of 40% of all passenger journeys are made by bus pass holders. The council reimburses the bus operators for lost revenue. The overall budget for Concessionary Bus Travel is £2.4 million. Bus companies receive approx. 56% reimbursement, and so a bus service used primarily by pass holders is less likely to be profitable.

Q20. S106 money went to Marston Moretaine's new development. The bus route doesn't touch the site, and we've had complaints that the development has failed to consider bus services.

A20. CBC has used Section 106 funding in conjunction with Cranfield University to provide new bus services C10, C11 and C3 to Marston Moretaine. A Sunday service has been reinstated. We are investigating if the service can penetrate the estate, but we have to take account of parked cars.

Parking Strategy

Car Parking Strategy - Jim Tombe

Jim explained that the need for a Parking strategy is in response to statutory requirements set out in the Traffic management Act 2004, which places a duty on local authorities to reduce the cause of congestion and disruption by controlling parking; whilst the National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure. Furthermore the legislation says parking regimes should not undermine the vitality of town centres, and parking enforcement should be proportionate.

Locally, Central Bedfordshire Council wants a parking strategy that addresses local issues such as managing congestion and helping people to get to where they want to be safely, whilst also accommodating future growth.

The role therefore of the parking strategy is to help achieve economic, social and environmental objectives. It will set out a comprehensive approach to

managing on street and off street parking provision, control and enforcement, seek to ensure the safety of all road users and support the use of sustainable travel.

The planned timescale for delivering the strategy is to gather data and evidence during the winter months, prepare a draft strategy in spring 2016, consult widely during spring and summer; with the aim of adopting the strategy in autumn 2016.

Summary of table discussions

Jim and colleagues facilitated a table exercise which asked delegates to consider responses to the following questions:

1. What are the major issues around parking affecting you?
2. What do you see as potential solutions
3. What should be CBC's priorities?

Through the discussion exercise many common parking issues were identified: the need to look at parking capacity at our railway stations to allow for linked trips by car and public transport; the level of enforcement needed to control inconsiderate parking (particularly in the vicinity of schools); parking levels in new developments; and the effect of the current parking charging policy on businesses in our town centres.

There were also potential solutions suggested which could help us to deal with some of these issues, including: investigating in the use of shared transport; increasing parking restrictions in key areas of concern, and ensuring these restrictions are enforced (perhaps randomly) to create a deterrent; considering offering free parking to encourage shoppers into our town centres; utilising existing car parks which are under used at present; and prioritising public transport routes that can offer an alternative to using the car.

These observations will assist in forming the basis for the parking strategy which will be formally consulted on in due course. The flip chart results are attached in Appendix 1.

Developing our vision for the next five years

Central Bedfordshire's Five Year Plan - Cllr James Jamieson

An opportunity to hear more about the key strategic priorities to make Central Bedfordshire a great place to live and work, and to explore how we can work together more effectively to deliver them. Councillor Jamieson updated delegates on the progress to develop our new five year plan. He referred to the current plan 'Delivering your Priorities' and recent resident surveys which confirmed we have done a reasonable job; but we need excellence.

The new plan has six priorities defined by targets and key performance indicators, and all contribute to the vision that Central Bedfordshire is a great place to live and work.

Cllr Jamieson spoke about each of the priorities. Protecting the Vulnerable and Promoting Wellbeing takes up approximately two thirds of the council's budget. A key focus for the Conference was on Building Stronger Communities. This is a key priority. We want to inspire residents of all ages to do more in and for their communities. This does not have to be through formal volunteering.

Feedback from table discussions

Cllr Jamieson requested feedback on the following questions:

1. Views on the target areas across each of the priorities
2. Working together more effectively to:
 - Inspire Community identity and action
 - Redefine perceptions of age and unlock potential of older residents
 - Local delivery for / by the communities we collectively represent.

Regarding the target areas listed for each priority delegates felt that of critical importance is to have the appropriate infrastructure (houses, jobs and entertainment) alongside more careers advice in schools, vocational courses within the colleges, more apprenticeships for 18-24 year olds, support for NEETs to improve their skills and encourage young people to stay local rather than move away.

In terms of working together delegates felt that individuals have busy lives and limited time and capacity to do more in their communities. They may also be put off by litigation if harm or injury occurs as a result of their voluntary activity.

Town and parish councils are well placed and motivated to do more, especially following recent elections. There could be greater collaboration between parish councils and more devolution, but resources and capacity are an issue. Together, councils can foster, support and facilitate strong communities. It must be 'bottom up'; community groups need to be nurtured and helped to network, whilst ward councillors are a vital link and very supportive. The flip chart results are attached in Appendix 2.

Questions

Q21. General observation; there has been a lot of thinking about the Five Year Plan and strategy but the council is not so good at long term thinking. The reality is that in Central Bedfordshire the two possible developments (East West Railway link and St Neots by pass) will totally transform Central Bedfordshire. The difficulty is how to take this into account at this time.

A21. The Five Year Plan is about a strategy of thinking for the longer term. The Local Plan also looks out 25 years, which would include planning

for major new infrastructure such as E-W rail and St Neots by pass. On these two specific projects we have been working hard with neighbouring councils to move these forward.

Q22. Central Bedfordshire is a non-responsive council and not proactive in asking what towns and parishes want. Your vision is a description of what you want, and you've not consulted residents, unlike Milton Keynes whose visions are what residents want.

A22. We believe we have consulted extensively with our residents to seek their views on a Vision for Central Bedfordshire. During the summer we asked key stakeholders and residents about our proposed priorities for the next 5 years. The feedback was valuable and has been embraced in the vision and proposals shared with you tonight.

Q23. In relation to saying you want people to become more involved – do people actually feel they have got the time? Some older residents are still working and involved in management at work. When they come home they just want to relax.

A23. We appreciate people are busy with work and families but we are also aware of numerous examples of people who have the time, skills, desire and energy; who want to give something to their community. I want to encourage this to happen more frequently. We can all help each other.

Q24. Monitoring appropriate housing for communities – there are not the right sort of houses to remain in the community where people have spent the last 35-40 years.

A24. The decision to downsize is a difficult one. We have some notable successes in Central Bedfordshire, Priory View in Dunstable and a new scheme is being developed in Houghton Regis to provide the right sort of accommodation and enable more people to live in the same community. For younger residents our policy is that 30% of new housing should be affordable.

Q25. The disadvantage is litigation, environment and being afraid of helping someone in case it goes wrong – you could end up being sued.

A25. I agree. Government guidance on the matter is insufficient. We need something stronger and be able to remove barriers that prevent people from doing more in their communities.

Q26. Try to keep children within the environment – got to have housing and jobs, entertainment to keep them there. Need to build a community/society so they won't move away.

A26. I agree. The £4m Market Town Regeneration Fund provides the chance to Town and Parish councils to work in partnership with the council and explore ways to fulfil their economic potential. Aimed principally at market towns facing pressures from significant population growth, this two year initiative (from 2016-2018) is backed by the continuing work being delivered by the council on areas of

regeneration, business support, employment and skills. For example B/E Aerospace in Leighton Buzzard has doubled its workforce in two years to more than 650 employees.

Q27. Regarding Dunstable – facility provision and community involvement – need more help from the council as communities evolve and develop. This is a fairly new council with visionary ideas that you want to take forward, but we want a key point of contact (officer) from CB to carry through. It would help if we knew who in the council to contact when looking at parking enforcement, grass cutting, littering policy etc.

A27. The Dunstable Joint Committee chaired by Cllr Carole Hegley is a valuable mechanism and opportunity for the two councils to work together. Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement should be your key officer point of contact to address issues or explore opportunities to devolve services.

SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Passenger Transport

Q28. Most of the bus timetables in Meppershall are on the wrong side of the road. I reported this when they were first posted, but nothing has changed. I tried to use my concessionary bus pass on the Bedford P&R before 10 am and it was refused. Could we have a reciprocal arrangement with Luton and Bedford Borough Council?

A28. We will check the situation in Meppershall. CBC passes can be used in Bedford after 0930 on Mondays to Fridays. It is up to the authority where the boarding stop is located (e.g. Bedford Park & Ride) if they wish to allow free or discounted travel before 0930 Mondays to Fridays, as they are financially liable to the bus operator, in accordance with national terms.

Q29. About 10 years ago our Parish benefitted from a Taxi Voucher Scheme, where we were given a sum of money to subsidise locals' taxi journeys. This gives the locals the flexibility to travel at their convenience. Do you have any plans to implement such a scheme?

A29. We will look at this option. However in the past the taxi scheme was in addition to bus services. We would have to assess the likely cost of such a scheme and compare with cost of providing a bus service.

Q30. CBC seems to be all about what is “going to take place” not what “has taken place”. Consultation has to result in positive action. CBC always seems to be in the consultation phase. Paid employees at CBC could find out train times (both Bedford- Bletchley line and 2 main lines into London) + all existing bus services and do their own calculations/timing

work with commercial operators, rather than expecting volunteer Parish Councillors to do it for them.

A30. CBC staff do this, but we would like local involvement on levels of service that would be supported by local residents.

Q31. Can we please have some extra buses at rush hour through Houghton Regis and Luton, 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm? More buses in Houghton Regis with fares being cheaper.

A31. There are four Arriva buses an hour in each direction between the whole of Houghton Regis and Luton. In addition Centrebus provide two buses per hour from Houghton Regis Church to Luton. Fares and times are set by the commercial operators. Discounted weekly and monthly tickets are available (e.g. Hip-Hop).

Q32. Are there sufficient 'incentives' for Dial-a-Ride schemes to do even more for the community than done at present? Have the bus companies the right forms of transport (double decker/lg people carrier) to meet the needs of the community, esp rural areas?

A32. The consultation will look at whether community buses can do more than present. Large vehicles (e.g. double decks) may be seen on some rural journeys, because at certain times of the day they may be carrying high volumes of school children. This may be more economical than having a secondary small vehicle which is just used for low usage journeys.

Q33. Need to have a strategic plan to link all public transport; bus and rail, integrated transport system discussed. Does this really need a survey? Survey cost too high, need to look at on-line type surveys if actually required.

A33. The Local Transport Strategy will look at all forms of transport (including integration). This is a central government requirement.

Q34. Cost of consultation is extortionate @ £30K! What exactly is the process of the consultation and what is the cost breakdown to it? Is it value for money? SurveyMonkey is a great tool to create a survey for feedback – surely this can be done cheaper and still achieve the desired outcomes?

A34. The consultation is more than just setting out an online survey. There is also market research being undertaken, telephone surveys and focus groups. This is the maximum budget we have that doesn't necessarily mean that the whole budget will be spent.

Q35. More detail on process and what is already known. Is this to cut spending, target or increase spend?

A35. We have information from the CBC Household transport survey and we have the costs to the council of payments made to operators and bus usage. We will be undertaking Market Research into use of Community Transport. In February a full twelve week consultation process will begin regarding subsidised public transport, concessionary fares and community transport. This will be via

surveys, telephone surveys, focus groups etc. A communications plan is being developed for the safe walking routes and internal consultations with other service teams will be undertaken in relation to fleet services and operations. Once we have gathered all of the information only then will we be in a position to produce the strategy.

Q36. How can you plan passenger transport without the railway?

A36. CBC will be taking into account rail services in determining a public transport strategy.

Q37. No answer to the question about how much this strategy is going to cost? The answer of £100,000 for a bus turning circle is complete nonsense.

A37. See answer to Q34 above. The production of the strategy will only cost whatever the consultation costs as CBC staff are undertaking the work to produce the strategy. The cost of a turning circle in Engayne Avenue has been provided by our Highways Department having assessed the work needed to strengthen the road, and facilitate buses turning in and out.

Q38. The 73 bus route in Sandy, and particularly in the Engayne Avenue area, continues to generate strong emotions. Please can a long term solution to this problem be sought? Why not negotiate the bus turning circle with the Upper School? There would be no cost; simply a need to avoid times of student movements.

A38. The Upper School is not always open. Buses would have to avoid at certain times.

Q39. Early (before 7am) and late (after 6pm) buses needed.

A39. We will consider all evidence in the development of the strategy.

Q40. I was pleased to hear a budget is in place for the turning circle in Sandy. I would be grateful for any information on the projects timescale and when we can expect to see work being. There is currently a 2 turning circle at the entrance to Sandy Upper School. Could this be used in the interim via negotiations with the school?

A40. A consultation has to be held first. There must be support from those living in the flats, and buses must be able to turn around without hindrance.

Q41. Will the consultation look at “joined up” transport in Sandy to encompass the north of the town to station and Bedford (73 bus)? Buses to the station none before 9.15am and none after 5.15? Commuters have to drive, walk or bike.

The cost estimate quoted for the turning circle of £100K seems excessive – could I have a breakdown of the cost?

Elderly and disabled are now isolated as it’s a 1 mile walk to catch a Bedford bus for shopping or hospital. For a bus service to be viable it has to be on a route where its needed

and at times when it is needed. This is not the case in Sandy at present.

A41. See answer to questions Q33 and Q38 above.

Q42. Please use questionnaires to address a 'wish list' of people who move into villages, give residents an opportunity to see the public transport is for all. No mention of cycling.

A42. The use of sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling and gathering information around its use is undertaken as part of the work to inform the LTP4

Q43. How can parish councils influence route decisions. Can they be guaranteed constructive feedback?

A43. We will look at all suggestions. Ideas will be discussed with bus operators. Evidence showing likely public usage will be desirable.

Parking Strategy

Q44. No info as to number of parking spaces that are needed for extra housing/employment (per house/size) etc. It was mostly concentrated on the macro rather than microstate – which mostly affects Parish Councillors.

A44. The detail for parking in new developments is covered within CBC's design guide which can be viewed at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/urban-design.aspx>

Q45. Why is it – yet again – that CBC is doing data collection and strategy formation? What have they been doing for the last 3 years?

A45. It is understandable that it can be frustrating and there have been a number of factors delaying the production of a parking strategy such as external governance changes and internal reorganisations. It now seems appropriate to produce a Parking Strategy for Central Bedfordshire in line with the development of the Local Transport Plan 4. The data collection is imperative so that we can ensure that we are able to make informed decisions and recommendations, particularly as we are a growth area.

Q46. Please can Houghton Regis have a CBC funded parking warden?

A46. The Council operates a team of Civil Enforcement Officers covering Central Bedfordshire, including Houghton Regis.

Q47. Our Parish is losing a large area in the greenbelt to the Houghton Regis growth area. If anyone is interested in developing in our Parish against the Parish wishes in the greenbelt, will the large amount of greenbelt already being taken be taken into account?

Will the remaining greenbelt also be reinforced to safeguard the rest of the Parish?

A47. There is likely to be a further call for sites in relation to the new Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. These sites will then be considered alongside those already submitted between December 2014 and February 2015. However the sites will be fully assessed to determine whether they are suitable for development using rigorous site assessment criteria, which will take into account the cumulative impact of development. We have to demonstrate an ongoing 5 year land supply of sites for housing. Green Belt designation does not affect any permitted development rights

Q48. Is there a limit to the percentage of greenbelt that can be built on in a Parish?

A48. See answer to question 4 and question 47 above.

Q49. Expansion at Brogborough appears to be only distribution warehouses (+other similar uses) which has been increasingly imposed on the residential areas of the Parish. What measures are being taken to protect the residential areas of Brogborough from the increasing distribution uses – which are making Junction 13 on M1 a congestion hub!?

A49. The adverse impact of any new employment scheme whether it was submitted as a planning application or as a new Local Plan Allocation would need to demonstrably outweigh the economic benefits in accordance with national policy. If further employment uses are proposed, then careful design and landscaping can help to mitigate the impact on nearby residential areas. Any proposed sites whether they be planning applications or allocations, would also be subject to public consultation in accordance with the adopted statement of Community Involvement.

Q50. What measures are being taken to protect Brogborough from increasing residential uses in Lidlington?

A50. The adverse impact of any new residential scheme whether it was submitted as a planning application or as a new Local Plan Allocation would need to demonstrably outweigh the economic benefits, in accordance with national policy. If further employment uses are proposed, then careful design and landscaping can help to mitigate the impact on nearby residential areas. Any proposed sites whether they be planning applications or allocations, would also be subject to public consultation in accordance with the adopted statement of Community Involvement.

Q51. Suggest more frequent Housing Needs Surveys as offered by BRCC – to ascertain what the needs are of the elderly and second generation.

A51. Housing Needs surveys are undertaken as part of the process to consider development on rural exception sites. BRCC is commissioned to undertake these surveys which look at the current and future housing needs of the community.

Q52. Can ALL CIL/S106 spend be transparent to allow ALL to see where it was spent?

A52. All S106 Agreements are in the public domain on our website. Also all monies secured through S106 Agreements are listed on our website, per parish. The S106 Agreement is a legal and enforceable document and sets out the purpose for which monies are collected. It cannot be spent on anything else.

Regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy a 6 week consultation concluded on the 24th August 2015, the outcome of the consultation is currently pending. Comments will be analysed and adoption is planned for April 2016.

Q53. Is CBC actively lobbying for one or other of the E-W Rail routes? Does the CBC Plan have an integrated and coherent strategy for all parts of the unitary authority? How effectively does CBC feedback to local councils?

A53. CBC is an active member of the East West Rail Consortium which is currently working with Network Rail on the corridor selection for the EWR Central Section route between Bedford and Cambridge. The Sandy corridor would be the most direct with a connection to the East Coast Mainline and is CBC's preferred option. The decision on the preferred corridor will be made by Network Rail based on a range of rail industry criteria. Central Bedfordshire Council will start afresh with a new Local Plan after agreeing to withdraw the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy, the draft plan for the area up to 2031. The new plan will outline how the Council will deliver sustainable growth in the right locations with the necessary supporting infrastructure, meeting future demand for homes and jobs, while protecting the natural and built environment. Town and Parish Councils will be fully consulted on the draft Plan. The Five year Plan is an Business Plan for the delivery of services by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Q54. Community Engagement does not work! I have worked for a housing association for 8 years. It's never worked, they don't want the responsibility. We are not in the 1940s! To invest in this you will be wasting tax payer's money.

A54. We disagree. We have seen numerous examples of strong community involvement on a wide range of issues. Central Bedfordshire Council benefits from the services of approximately 1,000 volunteers on a regular basis, delivering a wide range of community initiatives. There are many other volunteers doing great work in Central Bedfordshire and we celebrated their achievements at the Grove Theatre this year and will be doing so again on 7th June 2016. Book a place and see for yourself (tickets are free). Our commitment to Stronger Communities underpins our Five Year Plan and is an investment in people doing more for their communities and being resilient to future challenges.

Other Submitted Questions

Q55. Is the comprehensive system of schooling sufficiently comprehensive to meet the needs of all our pupils and to meet the needs of the local economy, eg house building + all the skills required?

A55. Maintained schools as well as Academies are now able to make a decision to extend their own age range by 2 years subject to consultation with parents and other stakeholders.

The results of our young peoples' performance at GCSE and A-Level in Central Bedfordshire continues to improve. Central Bedfordshire Council and partners, including schools, have agreed a Partnership Vision for Education which supports our collective ambition to be one of the highest performing areas in the country. As part of this we have a workstream dedicated to ensuring young people have the skills to be work ready. As part of this we are working with partners to develop an All Age Skills strategy and work closely with training providers to ensure the right courses are available to support business needs.

Q56. Cllr Jamieson mentioned good communications in dealing with residents' concerns. Since I believe that people will increasingly be working from home, could not CBC increase pressure on the Broadband provider to improve provision "SUPER FAST"?! GIVE US A REALISTIC PROGRAMME!

A56. We appreciate that Broadband is now considered an essential utility, but we must also be realistic that a deployment programme of this size must be phased. We are extremely pleased with BT's delivery to date. It takes months of work to upgrade a single cabinet (on the assumption that there are no unforeseen problems). Across the whole partnership area, by mid 2016 BT will have upgraded 204 cabinets in 2 years, which equates to 8 cabinets a month. Given the amount of time that it takes to upgrade a cabinet, and the issues and delays that have occurred throughout, they have done an exceptional job. Work will continue and Project 2 will take us to 96.5% coverage by 2018. The project will continue to be deployed on a value for money vs coverage basis in order to maximize the funding available, but we are committed to getting to everyone as soon as possible.

Q57. Get BT to provide a more detailed map of indicative phasing @ Dec 2013. The one on your website shows part of Haynes "Phase 5" Dec 2015. The other part is "Phase 8 – 2017/18".

A57. BT are not responsible for the indicative phasing map on the website. This was produced by us, with the best information that we had at the start of the project. The phasing is all subject to change – in the event that works are harder than envisaged. There is only one phase left for project 1 so the maps will not be updated at this stage. The part of Haynes that was included in Project 1, Phase 5 was enabled, as expected, in September 2015.

Phase 8 was always due to happen at the end of 2016. However, Phase 8 is no longer happening in the way that we had originally anticipated. We have secured further funding so we can extend fibre further across the area. Project 2 will start in the middle of next year and will be available shortly.

BT was also awarded the second contract and we are currently undergoing a process with them to merge the two projects to ensure that the most efficient deployment is taking place. As such we hope we can bring the project dates forward by up to 9 months. This process should be finished by the end of December so new maps and updated information will be available in the new year. For those not due to be enabled for the next 15 months, and in line with the original Phase 8 commitment, we are about to launch a scheme that will allow those receiving less than 2Mb, to order a satellite provision in the meantime. Details of this scheme will also be available shortly.

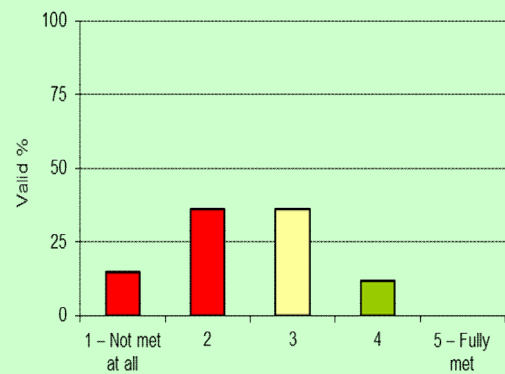
FEEDBACK ON THE CONFERENCE

A conference feedback form was provided to delegates, and results are below:

Usefulness of following aspects of the event

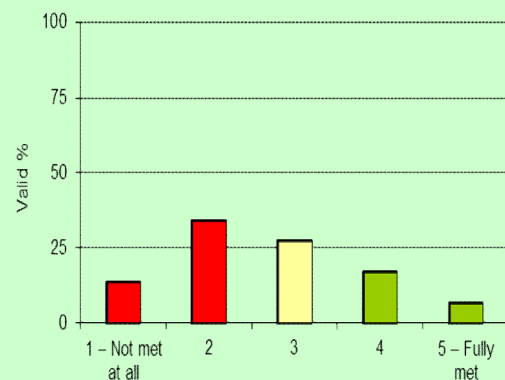
Passenger Transport Strategy

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	5	15	15
2	12	36	36
3	12	36	36
4	4	12	12
5 – Fully met	0	0	0
Total	33	100	
Missing	0	0	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	2.45		



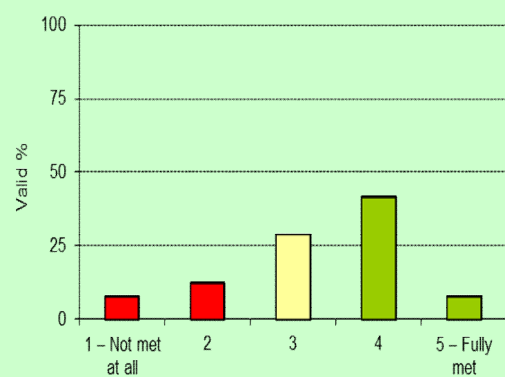
Parking Strategy

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	4	12	14
2	10	30	34
3	8	24	28
4	5	15	17
5 – Fully met	2	6	7
Total	29	88	100
Missing	4	12	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	2.69		



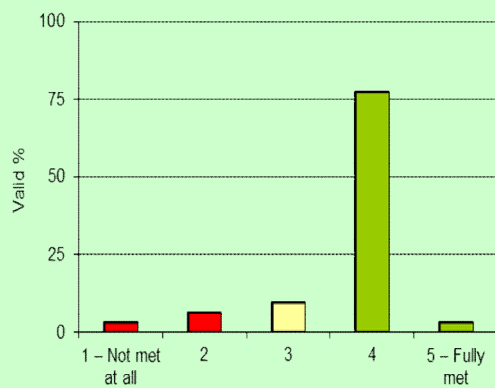
Developing our vision for the next 5 years

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	2	6	8
2	3	9	13
3	7	21	29
4	10	30	42
5 – Fully met	2	6	8
Total	24	73	100
Missing	9	27	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	3.29		



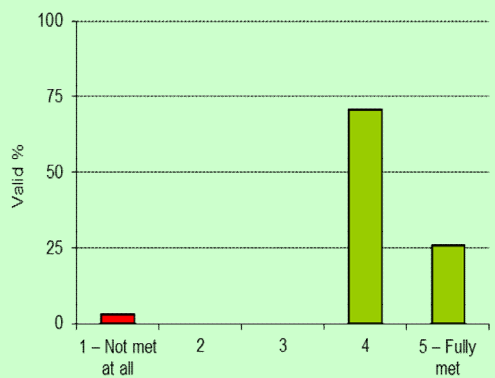
Organisation of the event

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	1	3	3
2	2	6	6
3	3	9	10
4	24	73	77
5 – Fully met	1	3	3
Total	31	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	3.71		



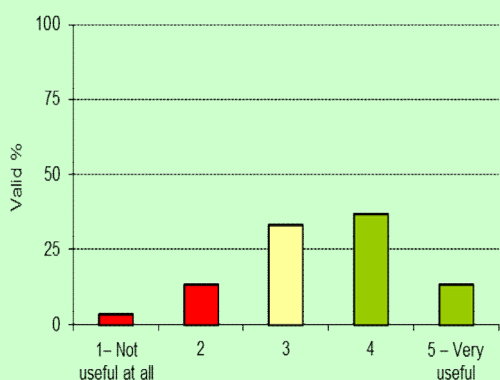
Venue

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not met at all	1	3	3
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	22	67	71
5 – Fully met	8	24	26
Total	31	94	100
Missing	2	6	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	4.16		



Catering

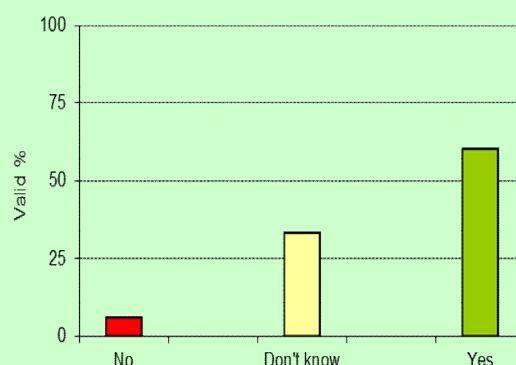
	Count	%	Valid %
1– all	1	3	3
2	4	12	13
3	10	30	33
4	11	33	37
5 – Very useful	4	12	13
Total	30	91	100
Missing	3	9	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	3.43		



Views of the event overall

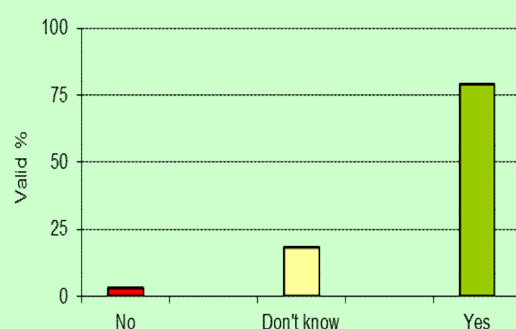
Did you find this conference useful?

	Count	%	Valid %
No	2	6	6
	0	0	0
Don't know	11	33	33
	0	0	0
Yes	20	61	61
Total	33	100	100
Missing	0	0	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	4.09		



Would you recommend attendance at future conferences?

	Count	%	Valid %
No	1	3	3
	0	0	0
Don't know	6	18	18
	0	0	0
Yes	26	79	79
Total	33	100	100
Missing	0	0	
Total	33	100	
Mean score	4.52		



Feedback from delegates

What topics would you like addressed at future events?

Devo max

Training town/parish council – to get community involvement in “local” issues

Whether there is a joined up transport strategy – need an event which displays this thoroughly

Planning strategy

Planning process

Environmental protection/conservation

Community funding

Provision for elderly care and independent living

Environmental protection

LSP and how it affects Town and Parishes
Planning controls – housing; doctors, schools, shops, transport provision
High Street Regeneration – re-thinking of roads.
Devolution of services to Town and Parish Councils – when no funding comes with it – how CBC expect Town and Parishes to be able to afford to take on these roles.
Traffic, regeneration
Grass cutting, linked into litter picking?
Planning (esp new estates – linked to parking issues)
Transport more time
Continued updates on the progress being made in building stronger and sustainable communities. Sharing good examples.
Devolution of services and the income that PC's could expect if they take on services (Brogborough cuts own grass – cost approx. £3000 per year – revenue from CBC = miniscule)
Planning, release of greenbelt land for building
Social Services provision for disabled, handicapped and their families and carers
Parliamentary boundary review
Road and footpath maintenance
Road/rail links – E-W Rail
Highways Management.
Policing.
Highways restructuring or organisation
Improvements in communications between CBC and parish councils

What other individuals, groups or organisations would you like to see at future events?

In reality there should be feedback from each parish with bullet points prior to this conference so the points are picked up beforehand
Planning inspectors
Representatives of Elderly Groups
The Environment Agency and Highways
Housing Associations – plans for the future
Working with 3rd sector
Affordable homes/social housing
BATPC – Cllr training/role of Clerk (each council is arranging training for individuals charged at £20 each Cllr, via BATPC)
Bus operators
Successful voluntary groups – sharing their journey
The new contractor that is replacing Amey
The PCC and/or Chief Constable
NHS – restructuring

Any other comments

I do feel the same things are being stated at every event
Give out handouts of speakers slides/Powerpoints!
I think CBC will do what it wants with or without our input
No place to put email address
Event services should embrace utilities as well as those that CBC provides
Good to network. I find the conferences are very useful for networking opportunities.

Developing our vision for the next five years

Good session.

Integrating councils, ie Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

Good overview.

Ideas from the floor please.

Very well done by Cllr Jamieson. Also very useful communication on local development plans by Cllr Young.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Engagement with our local communities through town and parish councils is very important to us and we value your feedback. This was a lively event with lots of questions; all of which have been answered and included in the report.

At this event we deliberately engaged with you early so that you could help define the issues and shape the priorities for wider consultation, particularly for passenger transport and parking. Your feedback on these topics, which locally have such an important role in your communities, is vital. Your suggestions for stronger communities will help take forward our Five Year Plan.

Finally, I am grateful to officers both presenting and organizing the event and ask that you respect their integrity in your questions and feedback.

We will contact you as soon as possible with details of the next event. In the meantime, please contact Peter Fraser or me if you have any further comments or suggestions: peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Councillor Andrew Turner

Executive Member for
Stronger Communities,
Central Bedfordshire Council

A full copy of this report and the workshop presentations can be found on the Council's website: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/town-parish-councils.aspx>

Appendix 1

Parking Strategy: Flip chart results

Issues:

- Emergency vehicle access
- School parking and drop off inadequate capacity
- Work / delivery / residences
- Lack of car parks in villages
- Non compliance by residents

- Railway Stations
- Parking too expensive
- Parking in streets
- Flitwick Park and Ride doesn't go to the station. Too many cars

- Old estates insufficient spaces
- Regulations on new developments
- Rush / Peak hour periods
- Arterial routes
- Width of roads on estates
- Destroying grass verges – bollards could deter.
- Enforcement of inappropriate parking
- Town Centre residents parking
- Partnership with schools to resolve parking issues outside schools
- Roads are too narrow on new estates
- Garages are too small for today's cars

- No enforcement sign was required when school markings were originally painted. Now requires a TRO Why was this not automatically put back when the law changed.
- Schools are generally a problem (just re parking I presume !!!!)

- Almost every house has 2+ cars
- lack of /inadequate parking in town centre
- Parking on corners
- People park at Slip End for the airport
- Inconsiderate parking at all schools
- CBC is building on car parks
- Knocking down garages to build flats
- 7,500 extra homes – need parking spaces
- We don't own any of our car parks

- Poor planning = insufficient spaces

- Lack of parking means internet business wins and retail dies
- Congestion from parents parking irresponsibly when dropping off children when school on main road through village.

Solutions:

- Education of public and social responsibility
 - Herringbone parking
 - One way systems
 - Adequate car parks
 - Park and Ride
 - Efficiency of use of existing spaces e.g village hall car parks
 - Services need to join up - Buses with rail
 - Need low cost parking at stations
 - More park and rides
 - Number of spaces per home
 - Solutions at stations
 - Improve access to public transport
 - Develop healthy walking projects with schools
 - Bus companies should review their routes
 - Use pavement for Parking
 - More appropriate yellow lines or restrictive parking
-
- Shared transport
 - Electric cars / bikes
 - Joined up public transport policy
 - Design traffic flow, eg roundabouts or traffic lights
 - Bollards on pavements
 - Designated loading bays
-
- Planning should consider greater off road parking provisions
 - New schools should have drop off zones
 - Parking charges – consider free 30mins and 2hrs at weekends
 - Reduce permit parking spaces in CBC Council car parks for shoppers ie Priors Church car park. Dunstable remains 50% empty everyday as no permit customers
 - Parking strategy should review Home to School transport facility taking into account impact on traffic flow and parking in area
 - Incentivise car sharing for taking children to school.
-
- Global traffic regulation order for Parking
 - TPC's be asked to put forward locations for yellow lines
 - We need a traffic warden
 - Money from traffic fines go back to paying for enforcement officers
 - More double yellow lines

- Robust enforcement needed
 - Parking for Busway – old Netto site
-
- Fairfield should have buses going through but roads are too narrow.
 - Need bus routes through estates
 - Roads too narrow land south of Stotfold
 - Design for buses.
-
- Let PC build parking bays without Amey interference
 - Let PC lay parking guides – white lines
 - Release yellow lines that are political
 - Value responsibility over errant parking
-
- Random enforcement needed if only once a month
 - Are we learning from parking problems in existing new developments (e.g Fairfield)
 - Put on adequate public transport so that people don't need a 2nd car.
 - Make garages big enough for mid sized cars.
-
- Share parking facilities – our village uses the pub car park for school runs and dropping off
 - Central Beds to provide affordable parking to encourage use. Expensive parking encourages off street parking
 - What is the number of cars per household eg works vehicles / cars without this knowledge you cannot calculate parking requirements
 - Access for emergency vehicles must be maintained and enforced at all times
 - Use of own off street parking must be encouraged

Other comments from table discussion:

- Parents need educating on how to drive and park near schools. When planning schools, leave enough space for parking or consider drop off points.
- Promote car sharing incentives for schools.
- Narrow roads leads to illegal parking on grass verges which does not get enforced. Highways need to listen.
- New developments do not have wide enough roads for busses and vans to go down the middle – this needs to be planned better. Planning Officers seriously need to think about this.
- HGVs often drive through unsuitable areas due to their sat navs being out of date. On one occasion we had to assist in digging out a lorry from the snow. Verge problems are a massive issue for some parishes.

Appendix 2

Five Year Plan – Flip chart results

- Localism to mean PC and Town – are allowed and empowered to ACT!
- Provide “easier” seed funds for community projects.
- S106/CIL funds spending in **COLLABORATION** with us.
- CBC provide IT support to enable car/journey sharing as subsidies decline.

- Do people have the time to give to the community?
- Appropriate housing within the community.
- Keep children within the environment
 - Houses
 - Jobs
 - Entertainment
- Isolation (working at home, as well as living there).
- Litigation.
- Loudest shouters get.....

- No mention of infrastructure to support other aims.
- No integrated planning policy to cover all areas – CIL.
- No feedback on responses – box ticking exercise!
- Education issues to development, eg busing pupils.
- Responses should be in writing/email, cc to relevant council.

- PLEASE NOTE: The M1-A5 link is in HOUGHTON REGIS NOT **DUNSTABLE!**
 - Time.
 - Capacity.
- Devolution
 - Litter picking
 - Grass cutting
 - Parking and traffic enforcement.
- Own provision of what’s in our community.
- Strong leaders → employed + not voluntary.
- New council → visionary ideas.
- Encourage new community groups and bring them together by networking.
- Community service department on TC.
 - Unique for us.
- Raise TC profile with CBC support.
- Priory View rent if working astronomical!

- In our view “the vision” is what a council should be doing anyway.

- How much effort goes into lobbying central government? Putting our point of view.
- Good Ward Councillors are vital links.
- Do councils “create” communities? Surely they foster, support and facilitate but must be bottom up.

(Dunstable – Arlesey – Studham)

- Target areas – better now they have been reviewed and changed – make more sense – more meaningful.
- Increase visibility of community and voluntary groups.
- Have a central point to gain info on, on all groups to help residents be more aware of what is available.
- Increase public consultation prior to policy changes being considered by CBC, ie speak to Town/Parish Councils more – parking charges example – Dunstable were not informed until on agenda and website publicly.
- Conversely are there too many consultations for Parish/Town Councils?
- Consider cost of devolution of services to Town and Parish Councils – smaller councils cannot financially manage.
- Increase vocational courses within the colleges to build skills and encourage ‘trades’ needed for the area that you live.
- Merge smaller Parish Councils to become more effective with greater ability to achieve across boundaries, increased income – and possibly have elected members rather than co-opted councillors. Inc; Dunstable + Houghton Regis Town Council to consider greater working together or merger to provide increased services to our residents.
- Increase activity in schools around careers advice and offering jobs fairs more to those NEET.
- Enforce apprenticeships more – 18-24 year olds NEET need to be engaged and doing positive actions to improve skills.
- Increase of volunteers’ bureau – use CBC/DTC/Town Council websites to publicise.
- Greater use of time bank facility and role out across whole of Central Beds.
- Reduce mental health and safety concerns – can’t do this or that – due to blame culture.