



SANDY
Town Council

LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION

A Vision for Sandy

Sandy's Community Plan



September 2018

The Community plan builds on the work of the 2011 Town Plan

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Foreword

The Community Plan for Sandy, including Beeston, which follows, owes much to the work which was done between 2009 and 2011, in preparing our Town Plan. Since then, some of the objectives identified then have been achieved but others remain ambitions. Furthermore, potential decisions elsewhere may well affect Sandy in a profound way. Central Bedfordshire Council has prepared its Local Plan which is still subject to review and approval at a national level. Whilst the current understanding is that the current review of the A1 is unlikely to result in the major change that is needed in our area, we continue to press for long-needed relief. Plans for East-West rail, though not immediate, appear much more promising and the line is expected to pass through the “Sandy Corridor”.

It is important that Sandy has an up to date plan in place, so that the needs of this community are clear, particularly when funding becomes available as the result of development or otherwise. It is therefore intended that this plan becomes a living document which will be updated as circumstances change. It is also intended that Sandy Town Council will continually monitor the plan to ensure as far as possible that it is implemented. The plan has been prepared by a working group of members of the Town Council, taking into account consultations with local people. However, the current completed version has been prepared for further consultation with the aim of enabling any omissions to be corrected and to ensure that we have captured as far as possible the views of residents.

I would like to thank colleagues on the working group for their commitment to this process and in particular the Town Clerk and his staff for their hard work in helping to prepare what is hoped to be a useful document which will contribute to the wellbeing of the Town in the years going forward.



Councillor Peter Blaine
Chairman of the Community Plan Working Group

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Introduction

Welcome to the Community Plan for Sandy. This Plan presents the results of an information gathering exercise, designed to discover what the people of Sandy think about the area in which they live. The Plan highlights the positives of the Town and its potential as well as identifying areas that need to be developed over the next few years.

In 2011 the Town Council and community partners consulted on and produced a Town Plan. This Community Plan represents a step on from the Town Plan, while still incorporating its findings, aims and themes it reviews and builds on these to produce a new comprehensive Plan for Sandy's short and long term future.

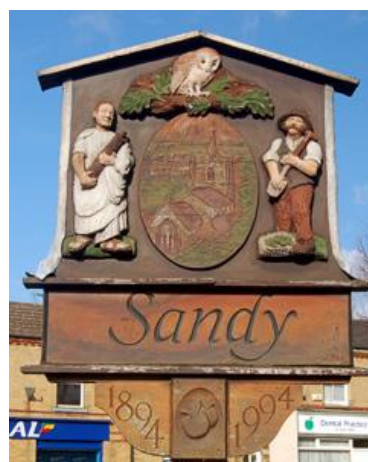
The Community Plan, through consultation with the community, prioritises the actions most urgently needed, over a maximum 5-year period, and points out where, and by whom, we would expect action to be taken- including action by members of the community. The plan will also identify long term priorities than will not be able to be completed within the 5 year period and will identify key requirements for Sandy which should form part of sc106 and grant funding discussions.

The Community Plan will play a vital role in guiding and shaping the work of the Town Council and its interaction with Central Bedfordshire Council. The Plan is evidence of the Council's commitment to collaboration over the future of the area. The Plan will be used to inform local and regional authorities and government bodies about the wishes and expectations of the community.

An Action Plan will accompany this document, providing a means to influence Central Bedfordshire Council Local Planning Authority and service providers. The Plan can also provide essential evidence to submit appropriate grant applicants to external funders, which if successful would provide significant additional funds to bring long term projects to completion.

To build on and complement the 2011 Plan, this plan sets out to propose priorities for the five years from 2018 and beyond. Using this plan, partners can work together to concentrate efforts and accelerate progress in the six important categories.

Sandy Town Council is aware of its legal limitations to effect change as a body in its own right. The Town Council will successfully carry out those functions which it can as an autonomous body to help improve the town, but will also work in partnership with other bodies and community organisations to ensure that the best possible provision for Sandy's residents and its future are made, the Community Plan embodies this working together ethos.



A Brief History of Sandy

Sandy is a small town in East Bedfordshire which takes its name from the Sand Hills of its distinctive rural setting. Located on the Great North Road (A1) Sandy has the benefit of easy access to the main commercial centres of London (only 45 minutes by train), Stevenage, Bedford and Cambridge. The population of the town is currently c 12,000 based on approximately 5,000 dwellings. The town is surrounded by the pleasant landscape of East Bedfordshire with its market gardening heritage and variety of villages, woods, heathlands rivers and brooks.

Sandy's long and fascinating history commences some thousands of years before the arrival of the Romans, yet it is this event which is perhaps the most significant as the story unfolds. The Roman invaders left the town early in the fifth century and in early English times, Sandy formed part of the Kingdom of Mercia. The Manor of Sandeia is recorded in the Domesday Book, as being the area that we now know as Sandy.

The present-day parish of Sandy, excluding Beeston, still traces the same area as the original 4,000 acre Manor. By 1290 it had split into three smaller estates: a smaller Sandy Manor still under the Beauchamps and two under local monasteries: Hasells under Chicksands Priory and Girtford under Cauldwell Priory, Bedford.

Although there are remains of an earlier church, it is the thirteenth century that gives the earliest formal record of a religious building being in existence. In 1240, William de Beauchamp is recorded as granting a church in the town to Cauldwell Priory.

Almost a century later a chantry was established. Records give the date of 1332 as being when the chapel was endowed for the chanting of masses. Sandy Manor descended to the Catlin family and then by marriage to Lord Spencer, whose son was created Earl of Sunderland.

In 1670 it was acquired by Sir Humphrey Monoux of Wootton, a descendant of a former Lord Mayor of London and one of the Justices who committed John Bunyan to prison in Bedford.

His grandson Humphrey rebuilt the mansion - now the site of a middle school, while another grandson built the rectory in 1731, demolished in 1964. Ownership of Sandye Place passed through several names in the 19th Century including Brandreth, Foster and Edgecumb.

Girtford and Hasells Manors had passed to the Crown at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 under Henry VIII. The King gave Girtford to John Burgoyne in 1541 and Hasells to Francis Pygott in 1542. Hassells or as now spelt "Hazells" Hall, which stands in a wooded park north east of Sandy, dates back to 1660 but was enlarged extensively twice during the 18th century after passing into the Kingsley family and then in 1748 by marriage to the Pymms. Hasells Hall was saved from demolition in 1979 and has since been converted to 12 houses and flats. Sir William Peel, a son of Sir Robert the former Prime Minister and founder of the Police Service, bought the estate in 1851 and his brother Arthur Wellesley Peel built The Lodge, a fine residence standing in over 200 acres

in 1870. This imposing property is now the headquarters of the RSPB.

Beeston, mentioned in the Domesday Book, is now in Sandy parish but was originally part of Northill. The manorial rights have been held over the centuries by several private individuals, notably in recent times by Godfrey Thornton of Moggerhanger House, Allen Jeeves, Albert George Jeeves and now Sandy Town Council, as successors in title to Sandy Urban District Council, which acquired the freehold of The Green in 1956.

A new Turnpike Trust set up in 1725 brought improvements to the Great North Road and in 1758 came the completion of the Ivel Navigation Scheme, taking coal lighters from Tempsford through Biggleswade to Shefford. This was followed a century later by the building of the Great Northern Railway and afterwards the Sandy to Potton Railway built privately by Captain William Peel. The line was later taken over by the Bedford and Cambridge Railway, eventually linking Oxford to Cambridge. At that time, Sandy had three stations: two on the existing site, one for each railway, and one at Girtford on the Bedford line. Each had its own station master.

The explosion in communications throughout the two centuries allowed Sandy to fully exploit its best asset, the acres of rich farming land surrounding the town. Market gardening thrived as growers were able to transport produce quickly from the fields to the town and on down the Great North Road and later on the railway to the London markets. During the late 18th century almost all the land cultivated in Sandy was in open fields with names such as Austred, Belland, Chester, Down, Low, Kenwick, Mead and Middle - from where the present-day

Middlefield Industrial Estate in Sunderland Road takes its name.

By the turn of this century, many of the town's present landmarks were in evidence: Potton Road cemetery was opened in 1891; the Conservative Club was built the same year and enlarged in 1897 to include a large concert hall and facilities to house the town's lending library. The Town Hall, interestingly never used as a town hall, now the Roundabout Club, was built in 1906 and by 1920 three schools were listed.

The population of Sandy grew steadily from 1,115 in 1801 to 2,118 in 1861 and 3,110 in 1901. Sandy Parish Council was created in 1894 and its first meeting was held in the new Council Chamber on the first floor of the recently constructed Fire Station in Cambridge Road. In 1927 Sandy Urban District Council was formed conferring "town" status on Sandy. Local Government Reorganisation in 1974 saw the demise of UDCs and the formation of a new Sandy Parish Council which later that year changed its name to Sandy Town Council.



View of Sandy from The Pinnacle

During the lifetime of the Town Council Sandy has continued to evolve whilst retaining its distinctive setting in a rural environment. The expansion of the town which began in earnest after the second World War included the development of a London "overspill" housing scheme between Sunderland

Road and St Neots Road and continued in the 90s with the creation of new housing at Fallowfield and Ivel Park. During the 21st century housing development has been on a smaller scale, with more infill developments but the potential of Sandy as a commuter town for workers in London, Cambridge, Bedford, Stevenage and Peterborough remains thanks to the A1 and the railway links.

Beeston is a delightful hamlet which sits within the parish of Sandy and is half a mile to the south of Sandy town centre. The development of the Great North Road over the centuries means that Beeston is now bisected by the A1. This contributes to its separation from Sandy and a strong local sense of being an independent community. In the heart of Beeston is an attractive 13-acre traditional village green which is surrounded by several ancient buildings.



Beeston Village Green

Sandy Today

Today Sandy is one of Central Bedfordshire's main towns, growing over the years the town has developed a strong community with mixed needs and ambitions.

Sandy is governed by two tiers of local government: the Town Council, and the Unitary Authority of Central Bedfordshire. It is within the Parliamentary constituency of North East Bedfordshire.

The town is around 50 miles (69 km) north of Central London with the county town of Bedford 8 miles (13 km) to the west. St Neots, the largest town in Cambridgeshire, lies 7 miles (11 km) to the north with Biggleswade lying 3 miles (4.8 km) to the south. The town sits within the Greensands Country and the land surrounding the town is dominated by a range of low hills known as the Sand Hills with the River Ivel running through the town.

The town's train station is located on the East Coast Main Line and provides trains south to London King's Cross and St Pancras and north to Peterborough. Journey times to London King's Cross typically range from 45 minutes to one hour. The station is managed and served by Thameslink and Great Northern.



Town Assets

In 2017 Sandy Town Council published its 'Planning Concept Statement' which outlined how the Town Council thought the future development of Sandy should be managed. A copy of the statement is available in the appendices of this document. The statement outlined Sandy's assets which can be used as the foundation for future development, enhancement and improvements when planning for Sandy's future;

1. Social and Cultural Assets

People who live and / or work in Sandy, adding to its varied community, are one of its greatest assets and the wide range of community groups and other organisations can help shape the future of Sandy and must be consulted with and listened to if we are to achieve a shared vision for the future of Sandy.

2. Physical/Environmental

Sandy has numerous physical and environmental assets which need to be protected, enhanced and used to create an environment to support and provide enjoyment for the community.

- The town includes a central market place and high street which is used for annual community events, although due to the need for road closures use for more regular events is limited.

- Useable formal and informal public green spaces, particularly The Riddy nature reserve and The Pinnacle not only provide the community with valuable outdoor space they also provide opportunities for visitor attraction.
- Sandy is well placed for transport connections, with the A1 and rail line, both of which could be enhanced or changed for the benefit of the town and future growth.

3. Economic

- The town has a mix of employment, but this could be enhanced if properly planned and linked with the East West Rail development. Enhancing growth in local employment through extension/relocation is important.
- There is a variety of eating and drinking establishments, as well as independent retailers in the town, the core of the town centre should be protected and enhanced.
- Tourism is a recognised asset for any town and Sandy's link with the RSPB and proximity to regional cycling routes must be encouraged and supported.
- The town has areas of designated industrial use which support national and local businesses.

Sandy in Numbers

(Figures correct at time of update in June 2020)



In 2016 the estimated population of Sandy was 12,640.



In 2015 the number of dwellings in Sandy stood at 5,620



Sandy is served by 4 lower schools and 1 Secondary School



2 doctor's surgeries'



2 Chemists



2 Dentists



1 Post office



1 Library



4 Churches



4 Public Houses



5 Restaurants



3 Cafes



2 Supermarkets/National food stores



5 Takeaways



4 Newsagents/
Convenience
stores



1 Car Park (Free)



1 Petrol Station



2 Nursing Homes



3 Sheltered Accommodation



1 Sports Centre/Hall



1 All-Weather Pitch



6 Play Parks/Recreation



1 Nature Reserve



1 Village Green



1 Village Hall



2 Social Clubs



1 Train Station

The Community Plan Process

A Community Plan aims to assess both needs and aspirations of a community including how it sees itself developing over both the short term and long term. A Community Plan should conclude with a clear vision of the Town's Priority needs and include action points. A Community Plan should provide a vehicle for communities to articulate their needs and aspirations in a structured form, with an evidence base.

Community led planning should work on a step by step basis that enables local people and organisations to participate in, and collectively contribute to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area.

This approach to community engagement originated in the late 1970's and has been developed over the years since. The need for community plans is because of the gradual withdrawing of public sector services and the increasing need for communities to take more active a role in looking after a communities' affairs. Over the years, community led plans have taken on different names including village appraisals, Town Plans, market town action plans and more recently via the Localism Act 2012 neighbourhood plans, which have concentrated solely on land use.

A vision for Sandy – Sandy's Community Plan Process

In the summer of 2009 the Sandy and Beeston Town Plan Steering Group (TPSG) was formed from residents of Sandy and Beeston. This group was

independent of, but supported by Sandy Town Council. The aim of the group was to find out what local people thought about their community and to produce a plan based on those views which would look to influence future development in Sandy.

The steering group then began a series of consultation events in the community and a questionnaire which was circulated to every house in Sandy, in total over 1000 questionnaires were completed and returned. In 2011, following the analysis of all the information and opinions received, the Town Council published the Sandy and Beeston Town Plan.

Since the publication of the Town Plan various changes in planning law and the pressure on planning authorities to produce Local Plans has resulted in changes to the documentation local planning authorities use and respond to. As a result community plans, have emerged as the next step from town and parish plans in helping shape the future of communities.

In 2017 Sandy Town Council set up a working group to look at developing a community plan as a step on from the existing Town Plan. The plan will build on the Town Plan's results and proposals with an aim to produce a comprehensive document that clearly defines the needs of future development in Sandy. Sandy's community plan will be a tool Central Bedfordshire Council can use when it is negotiating with developers and shaping the town's future via its Local Plan.

Arts and Culture

Introduction

This section explores the current picture in terms of the arts and culture on offer in Sandy and considers how cultural facilities/activities can be improved to help enhance the town and the cultural opportunities open to residents and visitors.

Arts and culture is important to help improve the vitality of the town. It is recognised that it is important to provide venues for all members of the community to meet and celebrate. It is also important to provide areas for the creation and experience of art and culture.

In 2017 survey participants identified a lack of available community spaces for workshops, community entertainment and music within Sandy.

53% of people surveyed rated the town's cultural and arts offering as negative

54% of people surveyed indicated they would not recommend a visit to Sandy

Source: People and Places 2017 Benchmarking Report

Issues Identified in the 2011 Town Plan

Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Provision of a Town Museum	Yes
Demand for additional community groups or clubs	The Council holds and publicises a list of Community Groups and clubs in Sandy. Several new groups have opened since the 2011 plan (Sandy Guild, Friendship Group, Woman's Institute)

Issues Identified through Arts and Culture Focus Group

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In next 5 years	Long Term
Demand for venues with storage for use by community groups	Work with existing venues to open up availability	Open up dialogue with Sandy Secondary School regarding use of school for community groups. In 2021 included as part of school transformation feedback.	STC	✓	
		Available community venues and space identified.	STC	✓	
	Identify new community venues as a key need for CIL and Section 106 negotiations	Consult with community groups about their needs.	STC	✓	
		Identify a new venue, including building specifications as part of a CIL/Section 106 wish list.	STC		✓

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In next 5 years	Long Term
Provision of a Town Museum	Use of vacant buildings in the town centre	Complete a review of town centre to identify suitable buildings for both a permanent museum and temporary exhibitions.	STC SHRG	✓	
		List of landlord details for all town centre buildings compiled.	STC	✓	
	Identify need for a purpose built museum as a part of CIL and Section 106 negotiations	Identify a new venue, including building specifications as part of a CIL/Section 106 wish list.	STC		✓
Lack of awareness around existing cultural and entertainment opportunities	Greater shared publishing/ advertising between organisations and groups	Contact all community groups and organisations to remind them of ability to advertise with the Council and push events through social media. Completed but regular reminders to be issued.	STC	✓	



Between 2016 and 2018 the Town Council worked with Central Bedfordshire Council on the Story in Stone Project. Which saw the creation and installation of public art.



Environment, Health and Wellbeing

Introduction

This section explores the current picture in terms of issues around health and wellbeing in Sandy and outlines priorities for the Town Council and community to help improve outcomes for the people of Sandy.

In a 2017 consultation carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council participants identified the following key environmental concerns;

- Protection of Wildlife habitat associated with land to the east of Sandy
- Air and noise pollution from the A1 and A603 and gridlock through the town
- Greater promotion of renewable energy in the area
- Addressing flood risk and drainage issues, especially if new development is to occur in the town. There should be no further development on flood plains

During the same consultation 59% of participants rated Health Care as the priority for infrastructure improvements in the area. The need for an additional surgery or a health care hub was identified by the majority of consultation participants, with particular reference to the need for a surgery to the north of Sandy.

The consultation also identified several other key factors that participants rate as important for individual and community wellbeing.

Open space was identified as a premium factor for quality of life and the protection and enhancement of Sandy's green spaces was important to the majority of participants.

Protection and enhancement of the river level. Concerns were expressed about the level of work carried out by the Environmental agency.

Protect The Pinnacle area from any future development and enhance the nature reserve and green areas around Sandy.

Source: Central Bedfordshire Council Community Plan for Blunham, Moggerhanger, Sandy and Tempsford 2017

Issues Identified in the 2011 Town Plan

Environmental	
Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Campaign to reduce general litter	Litter has not been identified as an issue in recent consultation.
Campaign to reduce dog fouling	Yes
Improve maintenance of overgrown hedges	Yes
Fly tipping	Yes
Improvements to footpaths and bridleways	Yes
Provision of more allotments	Yes

Better access for wheelchairs/pushchairs	Not identified as an issue in recent consultation.
Green infrastructure issues	Yes
Extensions and improvements to community parklands	Yes

Health	
Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Residents' experiences of using the doctors' surgeries in the Town	Yes
Residents' experiences of using the dentist's surgeries in the Town	Yes
Residents' experiences of using the pharmacies	Not identified as an issue in recent consultation.
Demand for Good Neighbour Scheme	Scheme in place

Issues Identified through Environment, Health and Wellbeing Consultation

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In the next 5 years	Long Term
Insufficient healthcare provision for Sandy	Creation of a new surgery or health care hub	Ensure need is identified clearly for Section 106 deliberations	STC CBC NHS CCG		✓
		Identify suitable areas of land and put bid forward to NHS to encourage health care development			
Effect of pollution from the A1 and the Sandy A1 Roundabout	Investigate ways to mitigate the effect of pollution	Dialogue with Environmental Agency and M.P opened up. Awaiting responses.	STC EA HE CBC M.P	✓	
	A1 to be relocated	Dialogue with Highways Agency and M.P opened up.	STC HE		✓
Protection of The Pinnacle from future development	Secure a renewed long-term lease from the landowner	A new 99-year lease was secured with the landowner in August 2018	STC Landowner	✓	
Protection of green space	Enhance and safeguard	Current ongoing work	STC BRCC		

surrounding Sandy	green space surrounding Sandy	with BRCC on Green Wheel development	RSPB Tarmac CBC	✓	✓
Enhancement of existing green spaces	Identify ways to improve existing green spaces	STC Recreation space improvement plan agreed	STC	✓	✓
		Set up working group meetings with BRCC	STC BRCC	✓	
	Greater relationship between organisations and the RSPB	Communication issued to the RSPB to understand their priorities for surrounding landscape	STC RSPB	✓	
Protection and enhancement of the River Ivel	Identify areas in need of improvements and lobby for work to be carried out by Environment Agency	Environment group to work with local groups to identify areas of concern	STC CBC IPA	✓	
		Open up dialogue with Environment Agency	STC EA	✓	
Mitigating possible negative effects of the EA's River Ivel Restoration Works	Work alongside the EA to address concerns over the removal of Local Corner weir	Liaise with representatives of the EA to understand proposed restoration works to be implemented over the next 5 years	STC EA CBC IPA	✓	
Council allotment provision	Secure site at Beeston	Ongoing work with CBC to transfer land to STC	STC CBC	✓	
		Work with BRCC and the Allotment Association on the set up of new allotments	STC CBC SDLGAA	✓	

	Identify site for a bigger allotment site	Negotiate with landowners	STC		✓
		Ensure allotment provision is negotiated as part of Section 106 for any new developments	STC CBC		✓
Flood risk	Investigate ways to mitigate the effects of flooding	Discuss with Environment Agency	STC EA	✓	✓
Promotion of renewable energy	Town Council to lead by example on all buildings and projects	50% street lights now converted to LED (June 2020)	STC	✓	
		Ensure all Council office building lighting is LED	STC	✓	
		Research solar panels for Council depot	STC	✓	

Sports and Leisure

This section explores the sports and leisure offering in Sandy and considers the needs and desires of local sporting groups and the towns leisure facilities. The results of a 2016 consultation carried out by People and Places have been used as an evidence base for this section, along with the results of the Central Bedfordshire Council 2017 Local Plan consultation.

What you said Sandy needs in terms of sports and leisure;

- Both the People and Places survey and Central Bedfordshire Local Plan consultation showed that residents would like to see increased leisure facilities for families and young people, with a swimming pool coming out as the most desired facility.
- The Local Plan Consultation highlighted a need for a purpose-built community centre for use by many of Sandy's existing clubs and groups.
- Feedback has identified that the continued growth and success of all football teams would benefit from a purpose built or designated football facility in place of the existing facility.

Issues Identified in the 2011 Town Plan

Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Skate Park Improvements and extra Lighting	YES
Increased Youth Facilities	YES
Provision of new multi-use leisure facilities	YES
Additional Sports Facilities	YES

Issues Identified through Sports and Leisure Consultation

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In the next five years	Long term
Skate Park Improvements	STC Skatepark Project Working group established. STC committed to progressing new skatepark and has secured £34,000 in Funding (Dec 2020)	Project plan to be finalised and further funding streams to be investigated before consultation with public.	STC CBC SSA	✓	✓

Provision of new multi-use leisure facilities	Investigate whether Sandy could support a swimming pool, cinema or bowling alley.	CBC leisure strategy has rule out a swimming pool based on population numbers and growth.	STC CBC		✓
Additional Sports Facilities (Need for football facility highlighted)	Identify need for a football facility similar to adjacent towns to CBC. Include specifics on what the facility should incorporate.	Included within Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Strategy for consideration during Section 106 discussions	CBC STC		✓
		Get joined up support from football clubs with evidence demonstrating the need for the facility	STC Football Clubs	✓	
Creation of destination park and gardens	Creation of a destination park and garden if a purpose-built football facility is created and the Bedford Road football ground relocated	Include long term ambition within Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Strategy for consideration during Section 106 discussions	STC CBC		✓
Improvement of the Jenkins Pavilion Sports ground offering	Commit Section 106 sports funds to the enhancement of the Jenkins Pavilion and area.	CBC including potential improvements to the Pavilion as part of their 2020/21 leisure review.	STC CBC	✓	
		Work with CBC and sports clubs to consider improvements and funding streams.	STC CBC Sports Clubs		✓

Town Centre Economic Activity

This section explores economic activity specifically within Sandy Town Centre and considers issues identified by the 2017 Benchmarking survey commissioned by Sandy Town Council and the input of a town centre focus group. The focus group included representatives from a variety of town centre businesses.

The focus group highlighted that lack of passing footfall was an issue and that they would like to see a greater number of one off and community events to bring people into the town centre. The group commented that there is a shift in Sandy's offering from traditional retail to food and drink and that a greater variety of establishments need to be encouraged.

What you said Sandy needs to focus on;

- An improved retail offer was a key concern for residents. You would like to see a greater variety of shops, including nationally recognised names and a greater number of retail shops.
- A greater variety in the choice of restaurants.
- You felt the town centre needed investment to make it a more visually appealing place to stop and spend time.
- More parking was needed for visitors to the town centre.
- New businesses should be supported by lower business rates.
- Introduction of specialised markets that are prominently located.
- Leisure facilities, such as a cinema located within the town centre.
- More flowers and plants to encourage people to spend time in the area.
- Encourage new traders into the town.

74% felt the potential of local customers was a positive for Sandy

39% felt the physical appearance of Sandy was a positive

54% felt car parking was a negative aspect of Sandy's town centre

The results of the Central Bedfordshire 2017 consultation echoed the results of the Town Councils Benchmark study, with a call for an improved high street offering, a greater variety of shops, more investment in the town centre and support for new businesses starting up.

The consultation also highlights the need to improve links with the RSPB and town centre.

Source: Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Plan for Blunham, Moggerhanger, Sandy & Tempsford 2017

Issues Identified in the 2011 Town Plan

Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Insufficient range of shops in Sandy	Yes
Location of weekly markets	No longer a market in Sandy
Demand for a large supermarket / food store in Sandy	No – Tesco came to Town after a need was shown for a supermarket.

Issues Identified through Town Centre Economic Focus Group and Consultation

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In the next 5 years	Long Term
Improved retail offer and greater variety of outlets	Invite required retail outlets to occupy vacant premises in Sandy	Identify outlets that Sandy is lacking in. Contact companies offering those outlets and negotiate for them to open in Sandy	STC	✓	✓
Reduction in vacant units	Match vacant units to desired retailers and encourage them to consider units	Identify all vacant units in Sandy and consider their best usage. Write to all relevant retailers	STC	✓	✓
Improvement and investment into the town centre's appearance	Identify areas for improvement within the town centre	CBC Market Match fund used to some make improvements to town's appearance	STC CBC	✓	
Greater encouragement and support for new business	Reduction in business rates and rent to encourage new shop holders.	Negotiate a reduction in business rates and rent with landlords and local authority.	STC Landlords CBC	✓	✓

	Provide access to a retail consultant via joint fund with CBC.	Included in suggestions to CBC Place Deliver Team for ways in which town centres could be reinvigorated	STC CBC	✓	
Community events and markets to bring more footfall into the town centre	Identify community events that would encourage footfall to the town centre	Create a working group to identify and hold/organise suitable town centre events	STC Retailers	✓	
	Run seasonal markets	Identify appropriate markets and resources to run them	STC Volunteers	✓	
Improved town centre car parking	Identify and investigate ways to improve town centre car parking	Review the results of CBC's parking survey for Sandy and consider possible solutions to be brought forward in the CBC parking strategy	STC CBC Local businesses Local land owners	✓	✓
Reduction of High Street Banking Facilities	Support existing facilities and push for more facilities within the town	Alternative banks were approached but none expressed an interest in setting up in Sandy (May 2019)	STC	✓	✓
Demise of Chamber of Trade	Encourage the development of the Chamber of trade or existence of a new business group for the town	Possibility of joint funding a retail consultant with CBC including in STC suggestions to CBC Place Delivery (Sep 2020)	STC CBC	✓	✓

Lack of footfall within town centre	Work with partners to introduce schemes to encourage footfall	Town Council promoting the Greensands Country Partnership to encourage the development of a tourist destination	STC BRCC Businesses	✓	
		Installed Greensands Country signage at entrance to town and promote use of logo	STC BRCC Businesses	✓	
		Liaise with RSPB to encourage a greater presence and link with the town centre	STC RSPB	✓	

Transport

This section explores the current picture in terms of issues around transport and related infrastructure in and around Sandy.

In a 2017 consultation carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council 89% of participants indicated there was a need for transport improvements, with 49% wishing to see vehicular improvements and 20% focusing on improvements to bus services. Participants highlighted two main areas of concern;

- Sandy's proximity and connection to the A1
- Traffic flow through Sandy

During the same consultation participants also identified;

- the proposed East West rail link as a valuable opportunity for Sandy which should be pushed
- Upgrading of A1 or a new bypass
- Poor access to the Sunderland Road industrial estate and resulting impact on Fallowfield area
- Concern over HGVs travelling through town
- Town centre gridlock at peak hours
- Cycle/pedestrian link between Sandy, Potton and Biggleswade

Source Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Plan for Blunham, Moggerhanger, Sandy & Tempsford

Issues Identified in the 2011 Town Plan

Issue	Is this still relevant ?
Support improved facilities for Sandy train station	YES
Frequency of trains stopping and departing from train station	YES
Parking at Sandy train station	YES
Support for East-West Rail Link going through Sandy	YES
Improvements to bus service	Not identified as an issue in recent consultation
Increase promotion of existing bus services	In part. Real time information has been installed in stops
Demand for cycle routes	YES
Pedestrian access across the A1 from Bedford Road	YES
Concerns regarding pavement and road surface condition and overgrown vegetation and hedges	YES
Lack of availability off-street parking in residential areas	YES

Concern regarding dangerous parking near junctions	Not identified as an issue in recent consultation
Increase reporting of any problems with street lights	No – people are aware now of how to report problems with streetlights
Street light conversion to LED	YES
Demand for a zebra crossing near St Swithun’s school and at Sunderland Road	YES
Concern about the volume of HGVs passing through the Town	YES
Speeding	NO

Action on 2011 Issues

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In next 5 years	Long Term
Parking at Sandy Station	Identify additional areas for more parking	Planning application for new car park next to station under consideration.	STC NR CBC	✓	
	Consider additional controls and locations for on street parking	Parking survey of town and streets near to station		✓	
	Pilot a scheme where residents rent out driveways to regular users	Research similar schemes and carryout consultation to see how many houses may take part	STC	✓	
Supporting East West Rail link through Sandy	Vocally support a East West Rail link route which will incorporate Sandy	Liaise with Network rail and CBC to push for a route which will benefit Sandy	STC CBC NR		✓
Increase promotion of existing bus services	Work with bus companies and other organisations so timetable information is widely available	Approaches made to bus companies. Minimal feedback received.	STC CBC IS Stagecoach	✓	

Pedestrian Access across the A1 from Bedford Road	Lobby for a safe crossing point for walkers and cyclists across the A1 near the Sandy Bedford Road roundabout	Approach made to CBC, HA and the local MP to outline the need for a crossing point and ensure it is considered during any future Section 106 developments	STC CBC HE MP		✓
Demand for a zebra crossing near; St Swithun's School Near the station	Support installation of zebra crossings on the High Street and near the station	Potential for crossings at both points have been progressed and due to come forward in 2021.	STC CBC	✓	
HGV routes through town centre	Improve directional signage	Identify problem areas and establish what signage is required	STC	✓	
		Lobby CBC for installation of directional signage at agreed locations. Some signage installed in 2019.	STC CBC	✓	
	Gather evidence of HGV levels passing through town	Conduct traffic counts over a series of weeks to demonstrate level of HGVs	STC SG19	✓	
Street Light Conversion to LED	Currently converting on a small scale. STC to pursue funding for complete conversion.	As of December 2020 50% of STC lighting stock was LED. Conversion ongoing.	STC	✓	

Issues Identified through Transport Consultation

Issue	Solution	Action	Who	In next 5 years	Long Term
Upgrading of the A1 and addressing issues around the Sandy roundabout	Vocally support and encourage improvements to the A1 and lobby for a solution to the Sandy roundabout	Working with other groups to lobby Highways Agency and Local MP	STC HE SG19 MP		✓
Bypass for Sandy	Vocally support and encourage the need for a bypass for Sandy	Working with other groups to lobby Highways Agency and Local MP	STC HE SG19 MP		✓
A1 connection to north of Sandy and routes to industrial areas	Vocally support and encourage the need for improvements between the A1 and industrial area.	Gather evidence to support need for improvements	STC	✓	
		Lobby Highways Agency	STC HE		✓
	Any future development to the north of Sandy to include improvements to A1 access	Work with CBC and any prospective developer that might be granted planning permission to include improvements within 106 negotiations	STC CBC		✓
Lack of cycle/pedestrian connectivity between Sandy, Potton and Biggleswade	Identify areas of possible connectivity	Review of route between towns to highlight areas or possible improvement	STC	✓	
	Work with CBC to increase connectivity on specific	Liaise with CBC to agree specified areas for improvement	STC CBC		✓

	areas identified	and establish timeframe and action			
Improved links between the Sandy Green Wheel	Town Council to continue to support BRCC on development of the Wheel	Council providing ongoing funding for Green Wheel development	STC BRCC	✓	
	Identify funding streams to ensure continued work to the Wheel	BRCC continues to identify areas of grant funding, including Section 106	BRCC STC	✓	
Lack of use of cycle paths to Potton and the north	Advertise cycle routes	Advertise cycle routes on website and Facebook	STC	✓	
Lack of town centre parking	Identify ways to improve car parking in town centre	Survey existing parking and identify areas of possible improvement	STC CBC Local businesses Local land owners	✓	
		Review town centre and consider any possible areas for new parking	STC CBC	✓	
Clean up of A1 signage 'clutter'	Request to Highways England for the removal of redundant signage	Requests issued to Highways England, minimal feedback and action received	STC CBC HE	✓	
Improvement of minor issues on stretch of A1 passing Sandy	Highways England to 'tidy up' A1 and more small scale improvements	Liaise with SG19 to identify issues to take forward	STC SG19 HE	✓	

Lack of Taxi Service providers within the town	Create a directory of taxi service providers	Publish directory of CBC Council approved taxi service providers on our website	STC CBC	✓	
Need for a footpath and streetlighting along New Road	Support a new footpath and streetlighting along New Road	Ongoing lobbying of CBC for a new footpath with streetlighting along New Road	STC CBC	✓	✓
Unsafe road conditions due to HGVs loading along New Road	Introduction and enforcement of loading restrictions	Ongoing lobby CBC to enforce parking restrictions along New Road	STC CBC	✓	
Lack of parking capacity in and around Winchester Road Estate	Scheme to increase parking spaces by using redundant garages and planters	Parking capacity increased via joint work with GU, CBC and STC. Works to be finished in 2021.	CBC Aragon	✓	
Need for increased train services to London	Operators to recognise need for increased services per hour	Ongoing lobbying of Thameslink and Great Northern operators and evidence need for increased service	STC Thameslink Great Northern	✓	

Sandy's Long-Term Requirements

It is essential that we get Sandy's long-term priorities right and clearly communicate them to Central Bedfordshire Council and any potential developers. The Community Plan has identified a need for infrastructure or improvements which are outside Town Council's current capacity or resources. The investment for many of the projects or infrastructure identified would need to come forward as a result of developer contributions or grant funding. As such this document seeks to identify a Sandy community

'vision' which clearly identifies those projects.

The following list will be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council to be included in their long-term strategies and Section 106 deliberations. The list will also be used by the Town Council when entering into any discussions with developers or the Planning Authority over section 106. The list will also be used by the Council when any opportunity for grant funding arises.

Sandy's Community Vision

What we need

Vision/Requirement	Reasoning
Arts & Culture	
New adaptable multipurpose culture hub to host the Sandy Museum collection amongst other things	Long term issue over no where to hold cultural events and to house the Sandy collection
Health & Wellbeing	
Creation of a new surgery or health care hub	Health care is stretched and unable to meet growing demand. Well planned Health Care solution is required
Housing	
Increased number of bungalows	Lack of suitable housing for older generations
Increased number of dwellings for elderly	Lack of suitable housing for older generations
Increased number of dwellings for affordable housing	Lack of affordable housing for younger generations
Environment	
Completion of the Sandy Green Wheel	Increased usable greenspace and protection of existing areas
Provision of allotment site	Long term need for allotment provision to meet demand in Sandy

Creation of a destination park and garden if a purpose-built football facility results in freeing up Bedford Road.	Sandy does not have a traditional town centre park with flowerbeds and recreation areas. Lack of available space but shift in Bedford Road football could create an opportunity
Sports and Leisure	
Multi use skatepark/BMX facility	Consultation showed desire for skate park. Facility would be more feasible if multi use.
Purpose built football facility for all Sandy based clubs	Lack of quality football facility to meet needs of all Sandy's clubs
Improve existing sporting facility at the Jenkins Pavilion	Current pavilion does not function as well as it might. Investment into enlargement and improvement could benefit several clubs
Town Centre	
Purpose built multi-functional community centre	Lack of central community space in Sandy of sufficient size.
Additional car park	Lack of sufficient parking in Sandy
Transport	
Creation of public toilets at the train station	Long needed improvement for customers
East West Rail connection via Sandy	Town Council supports the long-term ambition to bring the rail line through Sandy and the economic and social benefits this could result in
Pedestrian Access across the A1 from Bedford Road	No safe way to cross the A1 or connect Sandy for pedestrian use
Upgrading of the A1 and addressing issues around the Sandy roundabout	Roundabout results in pollution and congestion in Sandy
Creation of a Bypass for Sandy	Relieve traffic and pollution for Sandy and create and improved A1
Improvements to A1 connection to north of Sandy and routes to industrial areas	Reduce HGV traffic through residential areas

Creation of pavement along New Road, connecting Beeston and Sandy	Address long term safety concern and create pedestrian link between Sandy station and Beeston
Creation of a zebra crossing on High Street near St Swithun's School	Insufficient safe crossing space for children at St Swithuns school
Directional signage for HGVs at Fallowfield and Cambridge Road	Address long term issues of HGVs in residential spaces

The Way Forward

The key to success for Sandy's Community Plan will be ensuring that it is realistic, achievable and sustainable, building on the achievements brought forward under the 2011 Town Plan. Sandy Town Council will be the guardians and drivers of this vision, but it will only be implemented successfully with the help of partners.

Importantly the Town Council has started on a process where it is establishing what the priorities are for Sandy from the ground up. As pressure on housing stock continues and Central Bedfordshire Council continues to review its own Local Plan, it will be crucial to ensure key decision-making authorities and all other organisations are aware of what Sandy needs both now and in its future should it continue to develop in a well thought and sustainable way.

The Community Plan will provide a useful vehicle for the Town Council to prioritise its own work and budgets as well as providing a tool to have its voice heard within Central Bedfordshire.

Sandye Place – A Unique Solution for Sandy

During the drafting of the Town Council's Community Plan, the future of Sandye Place Academy ('SPA') came into question. On the 3rd September 2018 a joint statement from Central Bedfordshire Council and SPA confirmed that the Department for Education had reached a decision to close the school at the end of the 2019 academic term.

In the summer of 2018 the Town Council supported an application by the Sandy Historical Research Group to make Sandye Place an asset of community value in recognition of the vital role the facility plays and must continue to play within the town. The outcome of this application is to be determined by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The announced closure of Sandye Place Academy brings the future use of a strategically important site into focus. The site, including the entirety of the land and buildings, is under the ownership of Central Bedfordshire Council and has the potential to offer a solution to numerous issues raised within this Community Plan.



The central location of Sandye Place gives it strategic value as a community serving facility

The location of Sandye Place in the centre of the town, along with the adaptability of existing buildings and available space it offers makes it a key site in the future development of a sustainable and thriving Sandy. It also has the potential to help bring people back into the town centre, increasing footfall and adding to efforts to revive the High Street.



The existing facilities and space which form part of Sandye Place could be of huge strategic benefit

The importance of protecting the future use of Sandye Place as a community facility is crucial and as such forms a key action for Sandy Town Council. Although the Council has no ownership, rights or powers related to Sandye Place it is actively pressing Central Bedfordshire Council to work with the Town Council and other community partners to use Sandye Place to benefit the future development, growth and enhancement of what Sandy is able to offer its communities.

Benefiting Sandy

The facilities offered by Sandye Place could help the Council and its partners address a variety of the town's needs which have come forward in consultation during the development of the Community Plan. The following section highlights issues raised in the previous key theme documents for which Sandye Place could form part of a solution.

Arts and Culture

- The existing facilities at Sandye Place could be utilised for the provision of community space for the creation and experience of art and culture, including providing a town centre location for a museum.
- The need for new community venues for use by community groups and for the hosting of cultural experiences has been identified in consultation. The existing facilities could be adapted to provide the town with a such a venue.

Sports and Leisure

- Public consultation held by STC and CBC has continuously resulted in the identification of the need for a swimming pool in Sandy. The existing pool at Sandye place and its surrounding facilities could be altered and offers an adaptable and practical solution to providing Sandy with a community pool.



- The Community Plan identifies the need for a purpose built or designed football facility. Sandye Place could provide either the location for such a facility or by receiving relocated facilities free up space elsewhere in the town.
- Consultation has identified the need for both increased youth facilities, multi-use leisure facilities and additional sports facilities. All this provision could be met by the well-planned adaption of Sandye Place's existing playing fields, existing youth centre and buildings, including the largest auditorium in Sandy.

Environment Health and Wellbeing

- Consultation showed that a key concern for residents was the protection and enhancement of green spaces and the river Ivel, a section of which runs through Sandye Place.
- The facilities at Sandye Place would provide a suitable location for the development of a medical centre to meet the pressure which is placed on existing practices and will only increase as Sandy develops.
- The large amount of land offered by Sandye Place would allow the Council to meet one of its longest standing objectives via the provision of an allotment site somewhere on the available land.

Town Centre Economic Activity

Social and leisure activity in the Town Centre, based on a well-located town centre site, such as Sandye Place could provide a significant enhancement to the economic sustainability of the town centre. The development of community facilities at the Sandye Place site would inevitably lead to increased activity and footfall at a site immediately adjacent to the towns central retail and social area. Land available would also provide potential use as increased parking provision.

Sandye Place already provides a location for two of the town's biggest community events and could continue to be used as a key event site in Sandy, including for the reestablishment of markets.

Long Term Community Vision

Sandye Place could provide the space for many of the facilities that the town currently lacks. In many cases it is arguable that the location close to the Town Centre is highly positive. However, the use of such a site would require careful and detailed long-term planning. The availability of a large town centre site with existing facilities would enable that planning to take place in a coherent way with an eye to the future. Use of Sandye Place would provide all organisations with the invaluable opportunity to plan to implement the facilities the town needs, rather than simply identifying them.



The differing buildings already on site provide a unique opportunity to coherently plan for the future of Sandy

APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Terms

BRCC	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
EA	Environmental Agency
HE	Highways England
IPA	Ivel Protection Association
IS	Ivel Sprinter
NHS	National Health Service
NR	Network Rail
MP	Minister of Parliament
RSPB	Royal Society for Protection of Birds
SDLGAA	Sandy and District Leisure Gardens and Allotments Association
SG19	Local transport focused group
SHRG	Sandy Historical Research Group
SSA	Sandy Skating Association
STC	Sandy Town Council