

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 9 February 2016.

PRESENT

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)
Cllr M R Jones (Vice-Chairman)

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| Executive Members: | Cllrs | C Hegley B J Spurr A M Turner | Cllrs | M A G Versallion R D Wenham J N Young |
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| Deputy Executive Members: | Cllrs | A D Brown Mrs S Clark K M Collins I Dalgarno | Cllrs | S Dixon Mrs A L Dodwell E Ghent B Wells |
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| Apologies for Absence: | Cllr | Ms C Maudlin | Deputy Executive Member for Stronger Communities |
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| Members in Attendance: | Cllrs | Mrs A Barker R D Berry M C Blair D Bowater J Chatterley P A Duckett F Firth | Cllrs | Mrs S A Goodchild Ms A M W Graham D McVicar B Saunders D Shelvey G Tubb A Zerny |
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| Officers in Attendance | Mr Q Baker | Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer (Interim) |
| | Mrs D Broadbent-Clarke | Director of Improvement and Corporate Services |
| | Mr R Carr | Chief Executive |
| | Mr M Coiffait | Director of Community Services |
| | Mrs S Harrison | Director of Children's Services |
| | Mrs S Hobbs | Committee Services Officer |
| | Mr J Longhurst | Director of Regeneration and Business |
| | Mrs J Ogley | Director of Social Care, Health and Housing |
| | Ms M Peaston | Committee Services Manager |
| | Mrs M Scott | Director of Public Health |
| | Mrs G Stanton | Chief Communications Officer |
| | Mr C Warboys | Chief Finance Officer |

E/15/92. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E/15/93. **Members' Interests**

Councillor Versallion declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 14, Traded Services to Schools and Academies – Proposed Charges 2016/17, as a customer of the music service.

E/15/94. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Leader commented that a funding announcement had been made late the previous day in relation to the Local Government Financial Settlement. This would be explained further under item 9 Budget 2016/17 and MTFP, but it appeared that this Council's lobbying had helped secure some transitional funds.

E/15/95. **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

E/15/96. **Public Participation**

Mr Hamilton, relative of a resident at Greenacre Older Persons' Care Home, indicated that he wished to make a comment in relation to item 8, The Future of Greenacre Older Persons' Care Home. The Leader invited him to speak when this item was reached.

E/15/97. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

RESOLVED

that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 March 2016 to 28 February 2017 be noted.

E/15/98. **The Future of Greenacre Older Persons Home and Day Centre**

Mr Hamilton, a member of the public whose mother-in-law was currently a resident at Greenacre, was invited to speak. He explained that he had wanted his mother-in-law to be able to remain at Greenacre for the rest of her life. He had written to the Council raising a series of questions about the provider of Rosewood Court. In the event that the Council decided to proceed with Greenacre's closure, he was concerned that this should not be until Rosewood Court was in a position to take Greenacre residents.

Mr Hamilton also commended the Council for the respect he had been afforded and the transparency of the process, and he expressed thanks for the time which his family had been given to enable their involvement in discussions about this issue.

The Executive then considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing that set out the outcome of the consultation on the future of Greenacre Older Persons' Home and Day Centre. Separate consultations had been carried out for the care home and the day centre as they served different customers, and the future options, which were also different.

It was noted that Greenacre Older Persons' Home had small rooms with no en-suite facilities. The Council had been offered places at Dukeminster Court, a newly built residential home, and also at Rosewood Court, a home with nursing care provision, due to open in March 2016. This would provide residents living in the care home with an opportunity to move to a better quality of accommodation. Residents and families had been consulted and a total of 26 responses had been received with half of the respondents supporting the preferred option to close the homes and re-locate current residents. 11 people disagreed with closure and 2 were neutral.

The consultation on the Greenacre Day Care Centre had been over five options with the opportunity to identify additional options. Two of the options involved relocation of the service to Houghton Regis Day Centre. Preference was indicated for the service to be relocated to an alternative venue in Dunstable. Officers would be investigating whether there was an alternative venue in Dunstable that would be appropriate.

No public consultation had been carried out in relation to the Step Up Step Down Unit as the nature of the service meant that it did not have any ongoing customers who would be affected by the proposals.

The Executive noted the individual risk assessments that had been carried out in relation to the relocation of residents and received assurance that the assessments had been carried out diligently and in consultation with other professionals such as residents' GPs.

During discussion, it was reiterated that the Council was concerned to ensure that residents of care homes would not be asked to move more than once. Additionally, the Executive noted that the reason for seeking the delegation to

the Director to determine the date of the proposed closure was to enable the best interests of residents to be accommodated.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to improve the quality of accommodation for the current residents at Greenacre Older Persons' Home and maintain an appropriate service for customers of the Greenacre Day Centre.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the outcome of the consultations on the future of Greenacre Older Persons' Home and Greenacre Day Centre be noted;**
- 2. that the closure of Greenacre Older Persons' Home and cessation of services at Greenacre Day Centre based on matters set out in this report, its appendices and background papers, be approved;**
- 3. to authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to determine the date of closure of Greenacre Older Persons' Home, taking into consideration the assessed eligible care and support needs of residents of the home along with relevant operational matters;**
- 4. to authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to determine the date of cessation of the provision of service at Greenacre Day Centre, taking into consideration the assessed eligible care and support needs of the day centre users and their carers along with relevant operational matters;**
- 5. to authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to undertake the processes set out in paragraphs 89 to 91 in the report and to determine the location of the replacement day service;**
- 6. to authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to commence the processes set out in paragraphs 92 to 95 in the report to determine the future of the 'Step Up Step Down' residential reablement service; and**
- 7. that the commencement of the processes, set out in paragraphs 104 to 106 in the report, in relation to the staff employed at Greenacre Older Persons' Home, Day Centre and 'Step Up Step Down' unit, be approved.**

E/15/99.

Budget 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the proposed budget for 2016/17 and updated Medium Term Financial Plan. The Executive Member drew attention to the comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the proposals and summarised the outcome of public consultation.

The budget for 2016/17 set out the Council's finances and identified the efficiencies required in the light of the reduction in Government funding and other pressures. £15.3m of efficiencies had been identified for 2016/17 and a further £30m of efficiencies were required over the subsequent three years to achieve the proposed MTFP.

Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government made clear the Government's expectation that upper tier councils would raise council tax by both a 2% precept earmarked for adult social care and an assumed 1.75% for inflation in each of the next four years.

The Executive was advised that late on the previous day, the Secretary of State had announced additional, transitional funding covering two years only, in recognition of the impact of the loss of Revenue Support Grant. A short report was therefore tabled, explaining the impact of this announcement which was to provide the Council with £2.2m in 2016/17 and a similar amount in the subsequent year. This would reduce the need for the Council to draw on its reserves in 2016/17.

Further work would be undertaken to evaluate the final Financial Settlement and to ensure that this was reflected in the detailed appendices presented to Council on 25 February 2016 as part of the Executive's budget and MTFP proposals.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to consider the proposed budget for 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20.

RESOLVED

1. to note the response to consultation with the overview and scrutiny committees as set out in Appendices K and K(i) to the Executive report, and the response to consultation with the public and stakeholders as set out in Appendix A to the Executive report;
2. to note the Council Tax Base as set out in Appendix G to the Executive report;
3. that certain efficiency proposals identified in Appendix I to the Executive report be noted, as they would be subject to formal consultation and Equality Impact Assessment in the coming months. If, following a review of the outcome of the consultations and Equality Impact Assessments any of the specific proposals cannot be delivered, the Corporate Management Team be instructed to propose alternative compensatory savings;
4. that the additional transitional funding be noted;
5. that Officers be instructed to make any necessary detailed changes, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to the budget allocations, as set out in the detailed appendices to the report, as a consequence of the late amendment, for final presentation to Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that the Revenue Budget for 2016/17 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2016/17 to 2019/20, be approved;***
2. ***that in line with Government guidance, the following increases in council tax (CBC element) for residents of Central Bedfordshire be approved:***
 - (a) ***a Band D increase of £25.51, representing a 1.95% increase on the charge for 2015/16; and***
 - (b) ***a Band D increase of £26.17, representing a 2.0% increase on the charge for 2015/16, reflecting a precept of this amount to help fund adult social care costs.***

In total the Band D increase will be £51.68, representing a 3.95% increase in the charge for 2015/16. The CBC element of Band D council tax for 2016/17 will therefore be £1,360.01.

Note: Cllr Tubb left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

E/15/100. **Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2019/20**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the proposed capital programme for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The capital programme continued to feature some large schemes including the requirement to provide new school places, A421 dualling, highways structural maintenance, new highways depots and household waste recycling centres, the Woodside Link road and the Dunstable leisure centre and library.

The Executive also noted that a report later on the agenda addressed a proposal for additional capital funding for Dunstable leisure centre and library, which was reflected in the proposed capital programme.

Reason for decision: To enable Council to consider the proposed capital programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20 to facilitate effective financial management and planning.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20 be approved.

E/15/101. **Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Business Plan)**

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing setting out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the proposed Budget for 2016/17. Within it were proposals governed by recent changes in Government policy on rent levels. Attention was drawn to the outcome of tenant consultation on the proposals.

The Executive also considered an additional recommendation which reflected a late announcement that rents for Supported Housing may be increased by CPI plus 1%.

Reason for decision: To enable Council to approve the budget for the Housing Revenue Account.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2016/17 be approved, as follows:

- 1. that the recent legislative changes relating to Housing Finance and their impact on the Landlord Business Plan, be noted;***
- 2. that the HRA's debt portfolio and interest payments due in 2015/16, be noted;***
- 3. that the intention to commence principal debt repayments from 2017/18, as approved previously by Council in February 2015, be noted;***
- 4. that the Landlord Business Investment Plan, which proposes HRA investment throughout the Council area, be approved;***
- 5. that the HRA Revenue Budget for 2016/17 and the Landlord Business Plan summary at Appendices A and B to the Executive report, be approved;***
- 6. that the 2016/17 to 2019/20 HRA Capital Programme at Appendix C to the Executive report, be approved;***
- 7. that the average rent decrease of 1% for 2016/17 in line with the national rental decrease, as per Government legislation, be approved; and***
- 8. that an average rent increase of 0.9% for supported housing Tenants, be approved.***

E/15/102. Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources outlining the proposed Treasury Policy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17.

Reason for decision: To enable an effective treasury management framework to continue to be in place, in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (2011 edition) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2011 edition).

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17, be approved.

E/15/103. Schools Budget 2016/17

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Education and Skills setting out the proposed distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block for 2016/17. The Executive also received comments from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2016.

It was noted that the appropriate proforma had been submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on 21 January and that ratification was now required by 28 February. The Executive was advised that for future years, delegated authority to the appropriate Director in consultation with the relevant Executive Member to ratify the final proforma would enable the EFA's tight timetable to be met.

Reason for decision: To enable the Authority Proforma Tool submitted to the Education Funding Agency on 21 January 2016 to be ratified.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (Schools Block) for 2016/17, be noted;**
- 2. that the final proforma, submitted to the Education Funding Agency, be ratified;**
- 3. to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Education and Skills and the Executive Member for Corporate Resources, responsibility for ratification of the final proforma in future years.**

E/15/104. Traded Services to Schools & Academies - Proposed Charges for 2016/17

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Education and Skills representing the annual review and proposed charges for traded services to schools and academies for non-statutory services for the year ahead. An inflation rate had been applied in line with the Council's Budget Strategy.

Comments had been received from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To agree the charges for 2016/17 as part of delivering a balanced budget.

Note: Cllr Versallion had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item earlier in the meeting (minute E/15/93 refers).

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the charges for 2016/17 for non-statutory services to schools and academies be approved.

E/15/105. **Commissioning of New Lower School Places in Fairfield Parish**

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Education and Skills on proposals to commence consultation by the governing body of Fairfield Lower Park School on a permanent expansion onto a second site, including an increase of lower school places and the provision of a 60-place nursery. Demographic growth driven largely by new housing development in the area had led to existing school sites in Fairfield and Stotfold operating at full capacity.

Comments had been received from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the Council continues to meets its statutory obligations to provide sufficient school places.

RESOLVED

to support the proposed commencement of consultation by the governing body of Fairfield Park Lower School to permanently expand onto a second site, from a 2-form of entry (300 place) lower school for pupils aged 3 to 9, to a 4-form of entry (600 place) lower school for pupils aged 3 to 9, also providing a 60 place nursery, increasing the school's published admission number from 60 to 120 with effect from 1 September 2017.

E/15/106. **European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF)**

The Executive had agreed previously that each project proposed under the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) should be the subject of a report seeking approval before its commencement.

In view of this, the Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Regeneration on the outcome of the Innovation Bridge European Regional Development (ERDF) funding bid.

This bid built on the previously successful Innovation Bridge project which had ended in August 2015. The current bid proposed to expand the previous

delivery of innovation and support to small and medium sized businesses within the local area to enable them to grow.

Commencement would be from 1 April 2016 for a period of three years, and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would require this Council to enter into a funding agreement.

Reason for Decision: To enable the successful outcomes delivered by the previous Innovation Bridge programme to be secured for the future..

RESOLVED:

- 1. that the further detail provided on the Innovation Bridge European Regional Development Fund bid, including the budget, outcomes and any associated impacts and risks to the Council, be noted;**
- 2. to enter into the funding agreement with DCLG for this project to enable it to commence;**
- 3. to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Business and the Section 151 Officer to make any minor amendments to this funding agreement, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and the Executive Member for Education and Skills.**

E/15/107. Houghton Hall Park Renaissance and Renewal Project

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Community Services seeking delegated authority for the award of contracts for the landscape restoration works and the construction of a visitor centre at Houghton Hall Park, Houghton Regis.

The Executive was advised that the nesting season would start soon and landscape works should not be carried out during that period, which extended over approximately six months.

Reason for decision: The contract values were in excess of £500,000 and would therefore normally be awarded by the Executive. Delegation of authority to award the contracts would enable them to commence soon after approval by HLF Board in mid-February. This was preferable to waiting until the Executive meeting in April for contract approval, following which there would be 6 months of delay to avoid impacting on birds during their nesting period.

RESOLVED

to authorise the Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Community Services, to award the contracts for the Houghton Hall Park Renaissance and Renewal project in order to facilitate time-critical landscape works ahead of the bird nesting season.

E/15/108. **Redevelopment of Dunstable Leisure Centre and Library**

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Community Services setting out revised proposals for the re-development of the Dunstable leisure centre and library.

The report also sought approval for additional capital expenditure.

The Executive had considered the re-provision of the leisure centre services and library in February 2015, and in August 2015 had authorised the procurement of a building contractor.

Preparations for the procurement of a building contractor had concluded that a gross budget of £15.6m would be insufficient to deliver the recommended scheme due to higher construction costs.

A summary of the available options had concluded that option 7 at a gross cost of £20m would enable the Council's objectives to be met.

The revised capital costs had been accounted for within the report on the Capital Programme elsewhere on this agenda.

Reason for decision: Option 7 offered the most financially viable approach and would secure the delivery of leisure and library services. Additionally, further opportunities for regeneration would be created.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that an additional £3.519m be allocated to implement the redevelopment of Dunstable Leisure Centre and Library in accordance with the revised option 7. (Note: this additional expenditure is included within the Capital Programme being recommended to Council elsewhere on this agenda.)

RESOLVED

that officers actively seek to meet the additional £3.519m requirement through new sources of funding or from within the existing capital budget, in order to create no net increase in capital requirements during the period of the plan.

E/15/109. **Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2016 - 2019**

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Community Services setting out three proposed priorities, together with emerging issues, identified through the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment.

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny had recommended that the Executive adopt the proposed priorities.

Members welcomed the assurance that local community safety groups and town and parish councils would be involved in the delivery of the priorities.

Reason for decision: to ensure that “hidden harms” were recognised and openly addressed, to increase community safety.

RESOLVED:

that the following three Partnership Strategic Assessment Priorities identified for Central Bedfordshire for 2016-19 be approved:

- **Protecting the Vulnerable – especially from modern day slavery, trafficking of human beings and preventing child sexual exploitation**
- **Dealing with Domestic Abuse – especially supporting black and ethnic minority groups, under 18’s and medium risk victims**
- **Protecting our Communities – especially dealing with street drinkers and nuisance motorcycles.**

E/15/110. Tender Award of a Five Year Contract for Council Housing Gas Appliance Maintenance and Service

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing seeking the delegation of authority to the appropriate Chief Officer to award the gas maintenance and servicing contract.

Members noted that due to recruitment difficulties the procurement process had started late. The current domestic gas maintenance and service contract would expire on 31 March, and the next meeting of the Executive would not be held until 5 April.

In view of the urgency of this matter, the Chairman of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been consulted and had agreed that the proposals did not require review by his Committee.

Reason for decision: The delegation of the authority would enable the contract award to proceed in accordance with the programme.

RESOLVED

To delegate authority to the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, to award the Gas Maintenance and Servicing Contract in respect of the functions the Council is obliged to carry out under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

E/15/111. December 2015 Quarter 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the financial position for 2015/16 as at the end of December 2015, including spend-to-date against the profiled budget and the forecast financial outturn.

Reason for decision: to maintain rigour and transparency through the Executive's regular public monitoring of the revenue budget.

RESOLVED

1. that the revenue forecast position which is currently to underspend budget by £0.1m (over budget by £0.9m in November, £1.1m over last year) be noted and that directorates be requested to continue to take the necessary action to maintain a balanced budget;
2. that the inclusion within the budget of £2.1m of contingency that is currently forecast to be used, be noted. There is no call on this contingency as present.

E/15/112. December 2015 - Quarter 3 Capital Budget Monitoring Report

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the capital financial position for 2015/16 as at the end of December 2015, but not including the Housing Revenue Account which was addressed in a separate report.

Reason for decision: To note the schemes currently underway and to facilitate effective financial management and planning.

RESOLVED

that the gross forecast which is below budget by £42.5m (£24.9m at Period 9 last year against a lower budget of £116.8m) and the net forecast which is £32.9m below budget, be noted.

E/15/113. December 2015 Quarter 3 Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring

The Executive received a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing on the 2015/16 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projected outturn position covering both revenue and capital as at December 2015.

Reason for decision: To facilitate effective financial management and planning.

RESOLVED

1. that the revenue forecast position to achieve a balanced budget with a contribution to Housing Revenue Account Reserves of £6.067m, thus strengthening the Council's ability to invest and improve its stock of Council houses, be noted;
2. that the capital forecast position which indicates a net outturn of £1.525m below budget relating predominantly to the deferred timing on the Croft Green Development, be noted;

3. **that Right to Buy sales be monitored for the possible impact on predicted surpluses in the medium to longer term.**

E/15/114. **Five Year Plan Performance Monitoring**

The Executive considered a report of the Leader of the Council proposing the monitoring arrangements for the recently adopted Five Year Plan.

The proposed approach had been considered by each of the overview and scrutiny committees whose comments had been taken into account.

Reason for decision: The Council had refreshed its corporate plan priorities and in this context it was necessary for its performance regime to be updated.

RESOLVED

that the proposed suite of indicators to be reported to the Executive in future, be endorsed.

E/15/115. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that its consideration was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

E/15/116. **Land at Hitchin Road, Fairfield**

The Executive considered a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources proposing the disposal of land owned by the Council.

RESOLVED

to authorise the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to dispose of Council-owned land as set out in the report.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.50 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated