

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 19 January 2017.

PRESENT

Cllr D Bowater (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs A Barker
R D Berry
M C Blair
A D Brown
J Chatterley
Mrs S Clark
K M Collins
I Dalgarno
Cllr S Dixon
Mrs A L Dodwell
P Downing
P A Duckett
K Ferguson
F Firth
Mrs J Freeman
E Ghent
C C Gomm

Cllrs Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms A M W Graham
Cllr Mrs C Hegley
P Hollick
J G Jamieson
K Janes
R W Johnstone
M R Jones
D J Lawrence
Mrs J G Lawrence
Ms C Maudlin
D McVicar
R Morris
T Nicols
G Perham
A Ryan
B Saunders

Cllrs J A G Saunders
D Shelvey
I Shingler
P Smith
B J Spurr
R C Stay
T Swain
G Tubb
A M Turner
M A G Versallion
B Walker
N Warren
B Wells
R D Wenham
T Woodward
J N Young

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs L Birt
N B Costin

Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney
J Kane

Cllrs K C Matthews
Mrs T Stock

Officers:	Miss H Bell	– Committee Services Officer
	Mr R Carr	– Chief Executive
	Mr M Coiffait	– Director of Community Services
	Mrs S Harrison	– Director of Children's Services
	Mr C Warboys	– Director of Resources
	Ms M Peaston	– Committee Services Manager
	Mrs M Scott	– Director of Public Health
	Mr S Mitchelmore	– Assistant Director, Adult Social Care
	Mr Q Baker	– AD Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)

C/16/58. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 November 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the deletion of Councillor Tubb's name from the list of those present.

C/16/59. **Prayers**

Prayers were taken by Reverend Dr Bernard Minton, Team Vicar of Linslade.

C/16/60. **Members' Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

C/16/61. **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

The Council noted that a member of the public, Mrs Williams, had indicated a wish to speak about fluoridation of water in Central Bedfordshire. Mrs Williams raised concerns about fluoridation and the extent to which these had been considered by the Council.

The Executive Member for Health responded to the question and statements made by Mrs Williams and indicated that he would provide a written reply.

C/16/62. **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

C/16/63. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised that since the last meeting of Council, he had attended several Christmas Carol services throughout Central Bedfordshire.

The Chairman advised that a newly printed information leaflet about the Local Plan process was available from the Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration.

C/16/64. **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader:

- referred to continued discussions with England's Economic Heartland
- reflected on concerns that had been expressed by a number of Members about decisions on planning applications in their wards, being over turned on appeal on the basis that some Planning Inspectors considered that the Council could not demonstrate a five year land supply. Members concurred with the view on that the Council should seek to challenge the Inspectorate where appropriate, particularly where its decisions appeared to be inconsistent.

C/16/65. **Executive Member Presentations**

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing reported on recent developments within her portfolio including:

- the award of £5.6 million towards Independent Living schemes, including Houghton Regis Central
- the Council had been shortlisted in the Pinder Healthcare Awards and as a finalist, the Council had been awarded £500 to pass to an organisation of its choice, The Citizens Advice Bureau had been nominated to receive the award
- a Social Worker in the Children's Services department had been nominated for Social Worker of the Year and subsequently achieved a Silver award
- Linsall House had been rated 'Good' by CQC
- the seminar on budget setting proposals for Social Care and Housing had been well attended by Members of the Council
- a parenting initiative to support Looked After Children looking for a career path. An invitation had been sent to Members to participate in this initiative in their respective wards
- a Members briefing, to be held on 24 February would involve the Care Quality Commission and other care representatives.

Councillor Spurr, Executive Member for Community Services reported on recent developments within his portfolio including:

- positive feedback from a member of the public about children's Christmas holiday activities at Flitwick library
- a grant from the Royal Opera House
- investigations into the fraudulent use of Blue Badges
- new payment machines in car parks which were being installed from February
- encouraging results from the use of Household Waste Centres, in particularly the newly refurbished centres at Biggleswade and Ampthill.

C/16/66. **Recommendation from the Executive**

The Council considered a recommendation of Executive arising from its meeting held on 6 December 2016 concerning the Council Tax Support Scheme.

RESOLVED

that the current Council Tax Support Scheme be extended for a further year for 2017/18 with no changes.

C/16/67. Recommendations from the General Purposes Committee

(i) Pay Policy Statement

The Council considered a recommendation from a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 8 December 2016 seeking approval and adoption of the draft Pay Policy Statement 2017/18

RESOLVED

(1) that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 as set out at Appendix A, to the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

(2) that the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 be published on the Council's website.

(ii) Recommendations from the General Purposes Committee: Wixams JDCC

The Council considered a report of the General Purposes Committee, arising from its meeting held on 8 December 2016, seeking to amend the quorum provisions of the Wixams Joint Development Management Committee.

RESOLVED

- i) to approve the wording of the proposed amendment to the standing orders for the Wixams Joint Development Control Committee contained with the Council's constitution, to include the requirement that at least one representative of each participating Council (Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council) be present at any meeting, as set out in Appendix A, to the submitted report.**
- ii) that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the Council's published constitution.**

C/16/68. Recommendations from Audit Committee

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 9 January 2017, concerning a revision to the Council's Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Code.

RESOLVED

that the proposed revisions to the Council's Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Code as set out at Appendix A, to the submitted report, be approved.

C/16/69. **Calendar of Meetings**

The Council considered a report of the Executive Member for Corporate Resources seeking approval of the proposed Calendar of Committee meetings for the municipal year 2017- 2018.

RESOLVED

that the draft Calendar of Council and Committee meetings for the period May 2017 to May 2018 as set out at Appendix A to the submitted report, be approved.

C/16/70. **Motions**

(i) Notice of a motion had been received from Councillor Zerny as follows:

This Council recognises the importance of local ward Councillors and Parish Councillors because of their knowledge of the local community and the particular needs of their local area. As such it is important to facilitate their input to important decisions affecting the local areas such as choices relating to benefits sought to be provided through S.106 Planning Agreements.

In order to promote this local involvement, this council **resolves to ask the Chief Executive to explore options and develop proposals for improving the process for consulting Parish Councillors and CBC ward Councillors as regards proposed S.106 agreements affecting sites within their areas.**

Further, to report these proposals to the General Purposes Committee for consideration at its next scheduled meeting in 2017.

Councillor Zerny advised that he wished to withdraw the motion.

(ii) Notice of a motion had been received from Councillor Young as follows:

This Council understands that research carried out at a national level demonstrates that bank branch office closures have an adverse effect on local economies and communities. Accordingly, such proposals are likely to run contrary to this Council's ambitions to support the economic growth of our market towns.

This Council notes that Nat West bank has indicated that it is intending to close its branch in Ampthill – the last bank branch remaining open in the town.

This Council believes that although the use of conventional banks may be on the decline, they remain a vital element of the local economies in our market towns, not only because of the service they provide directly, but because of the draw they create to our town centres. Their presence has a positive impact on many of our smaller independent businesses.

National evidence supports this view, with a House of Commons report on banking closures suggesting that lending growth for SMEs is significantly

dampened by closures – by up to 104% in areas where the last bank in town is lost.

Additionally, the loss of these services will also disadvantage our older residents and those with disabilities, a significant proportion of whom are known to be less confident with on-line services.

This Council resolves to call on the Leader, with the support of the Chief Executive, to engage with Nat West and other financial institutions to encourage them to retain a presence in the major towns within Central Bedfordshire.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Young, Executive Member for Regeneration spoke on the effects of bank closures in the community and the importance of retaining such facilities in towns in Central Bedfordshire.

The motion was duly seconded by Councillor Blair, who along with Councillor Duckett, spoke on and endorsed the motion.

RESOLVED

this Council resolves to call on the Leader, with the support of the Chief Executive, to engage with Nat West and other financial institutions to encourage them to retain a presence in the major towns within Central Bedfordshire.

C/16/71. Written Questions

No written questions were received.

C/16/72. Open Questions

The Chairman invited Minority Group Leaders to ask a question each prior to the consideration of questions that had been placed in the Open Questions receptacle.

1. Councillor Zerny asked a question about how a petition seeking changes to the planning system.

The Executive Member for Regeneration outlined pressures facing Central Bedfordshire in managing planning applications.

2. Councillor Stay asked a question concerning issues with Gypsy and Traveller unauthorised encampments.

The Executive Member for Community Services indicated that he would provide a written response.

3. Councillor Bowater asked a question about the responsibility for claims from motorists for damage caused by works carried out by utility companies.

The Executive Member for Community Services explained how charges for such claims were processed.

4. Councillor D Lawrence asked a question about the use of inherited Bedfordshire County Council land.

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that the Council's approach to maximising both financial and community benefits from land assets.

5. Councillor Downing referred to a question he had asked at the last Council meeting about disruption to rail services and the lack of access for customers with mobility problems at stations in Central Bedfordshire.

The Leader advised that he had written to the Minister for Transport on this issue but had still not received a response.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 7.34 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated