

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 7 February 2017.

PRESENT

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

Executive Members: Cllrs Cllr S Dixon
Cllr Mrs C Hegley
B J Spurr

Cllrs R D Wenham
J N Young

Deputy Executive Members: Cllrs A D Brown
Mrs S Clark
K M Collins
I Dalgarno

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell
Ms C Maudlin
Mrs T Stock
B Wells

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs E Ghent
G Tubb

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R D Berry
M C Blair
D Bowater
P A Duckett
F Firth

Cllrs Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms A M W Graham
P Hollick
D Shelvey
A Zerny

Officers in Attendance Mr Q Baker

Miss M Brooks
Mr R Carr
Mr M Coiffait
Ms S Griffin
Mrs S Harrison
Mrs S Hobbs
Ms K McFarlane
Mrs J Ogley

Mrs M Scott
Mr C Warboys

AD Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)
Committee Services Officer
Chief Executive
Director of Community Services
Committee Services Officer
Director of Children's Services
Committee Services Officer
Business Investment Group Manager
Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Director of Public Health
Director of Resources

E/16/95. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E/16/96. **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

E/16/97. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Executive held a one minute silence in memory of Councillor Lewis Birt.

E/16/98. **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

E/16/99. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

E/16/100. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

RESOLVED

that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 March 2017 to 28 February 2018 be noted.

E/16/101. **Budget 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Executive considered a report that set out the proposed budget for 2017/18 and updated the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Executive Member for Corporate Resources drew attention to the comments and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the proposals and summarised the outcome of the public consultation. He also referred to the addendum to Appendix F as this provided additional exemplification of the legal considerations for certain specific efficiencies (Category C – Withdrawing Services). The Local Government Finance Settlement was unlikely to be finalised until after Council on 23 February 2017, so any adverse implications from the final Settlement would need to be accommodated within the contingency contained within the proposed budget. The General Fund reserves were continually being assessed to maintain a prudent minimum level to respond to unforeseen impacts. The proposed revenue budget for 2017/18 included a contingency of £2.1m. The reserve policy had been updated as set out at Appendix G to the report. To deploy reserves to offset efficiencies would be to compromise the Council's financial sustainability.

The report identified the efficiencies required to produce a balanced budget in the light of the ongoing reduction in funding from the Government and other pressures. £15.2m of efficiencies were identified for 2017/18. Following consideration of the responses from the consultation, it was proposed that the Council's element of the Council tax should be increased by 1.549% and a 3% precept earmarked for adult social care.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that councils would be permitted to apply a social care precept of up to 6% over a three year period. In view of the pressures in this area, it was proposed that the Council include a 3% precept for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

New Homes Bonus (NHB) was used to support frontline services and any growth above a baseline figure held in an earmarked reserve to fund infrastructure costs incurred as a result of growth. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed a reduction in the number of payment years for NHB from 6 years to 5 years in 2017/18 and to 4 years in 2018/19.

The Executive Member welcomed the feedback from an Independent Member who was pleased with the comprehensive and numerous briefings provided to Members to influence the budget proposed by the Executive.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to approve the budget for 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 – 2020/21.

RESOLVED

1. to note the response to consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix J and the response to consultation with the public and stakeholders as set out in Appendix A(i);
2. to note the Council Tax Base as set out in Appendix H; and
3. to note that certain efficiency proposals identified in Appendix D(ii) will be subject to formal consultation and Equality Impact Assessment in the coming months and instruct the Corporate Management Team to propose alternative compensatory savings if it appears, following a review of the outcome of the consultation and Equality Impact Assessment, that any specific proposal cannot be delivered.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that the Revenue Budget for 2017/18 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 to 2020/21, be approved;***
2. ***that in line with Government guidance, the following increases in Council tax (CBC element) for residents of Central Bedfordshire:***
 - (a) ***a Band D increase of £21.07, representing a 1.549% increase on the charge for 2016/17; and***

(b) a Band D increase of £40.80, representing a 3.0% increase on the charge for 2016/17, reflecting a precept of this amount to help fund adult social care costs.

In total the Band D increase would be £61.87, representing a 4.549% increase on the charge for 2016/17. The CBC element of Band D Council tax for 2017/18 would therefore be £1,421.88.

[Note: Councillor Zerny arrived at the beginning of this item.]

E/16/102. **Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2020/21**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the proposed capital programme for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The capital programme continued to feature some large schemes, including the requirement to provide New School Places, the M1/A421 Junction 13 – Milton Keynes Magna Park road, M1/A6 Phase 1 and 2, Highways Structural Maintenance, Dunstable Leisure Centre and Library and Broadband infrastructure.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that £1.5m had been allocated in the programme for the de-trunking of the A5. At this stage a feasibility study would be carried out to establish the precise requirements of the work and external funding would be sought to support the outcome of the feasibility study. Additional provision was made as a reserve scheme.

Reason for decision: To enable Council to consider the proposed capital programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 to help deliver the priorities contained in the Council's Five Year Plan.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the capital programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 be approved.

E/16/103. **Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Business Plan)**

The Executive considered 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 2017/18. The proposals:

- responded to legislative changes;
- made best use of the investment potential;
- accounted for the rent reduction; and
- aligned to the debt strategy in the context of long term business planning for the landlord services.

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 2017/18 be approved and:

- 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 2016/17, be noted;***
- 3. that the intention to commence principal debt repayments from 2017/18, as approved previously by Council in February 2016, 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 2017/18 and the Landlord Business Plan summary at Appendices A and B to the Executive report, be approved;***
- 6. that the 2017/18 to 2020/21 HRA Capital Programme at Appendix C to the Executive report, be approved; and***
- 7. that the average rent decrease of 1% for Council tenancies for 2017/18 in line with the national rental decrease as per Government direction, be approved.***

E/16/104. Social Care, Health & Housing Fees & Charges 2017/18

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources that proposed the revised Social Care, Health and Housing fees and charges for 2017/18, identified new services for which it was proposed that fees and charges would be levied and identified those charges where proposed increases were significantly different from the 1% advisory increase envisaged within the 2017/18 Budget Strategy.

Following a representation by a member of the public at the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2017, concerning the proposed charges for the guest rooms and meeting space at Priory View, Dunstable, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources moved the following amendment to recommendation 2:

“That the new fees and charges to be introduced for 2017/18 (Appendix C to the Executive report), be approved subject to the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing and the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Members for Social Care and Housing and Resources, being authorised to determine the fees and charges for the hire of guest rooms and meeting space at Priory View, Dunstable, including arrangements for a ‘Friends of Priory View’ association to be established, prior to 1 April 2017.”

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to agree the price of the fees and charges for 2017/18 as part of delivering a balanced budget for 2017/18.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- 1. that the prices of the fees and charges for 2017/18 (Appendices A and B to the Executive report), be approved;***
- 2. that the new fees and charges to be introduced for 2017/18 (Appendix C to the Executive report), be approved subject to the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing and the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Members for Social Care and Housing and Resources, being authorised to determine the fees and charges for the hire of guest rooms and meeting space at Priory View, Dunstable, including arrangements for a ‘Friends of Priory View’ association to be established, prior to 1 April 2017; and***
- 3. that the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Appendix D to the Executive report), be noted.***

E/16/105. **Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and the Prudential Indicators for 2017/18.

Reason for decision: To retain an effective treasury management framework for the Council and to adopt a more consistent approach to the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in respect of debt financed capital expenditure which pre-dates 1 April 2011. The proposal was in line with guidance issued by the National Audit Office and met the criteria for prudence.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- 1. that the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2017/18, be approved;***

2. ***that subject to the Council's external auditor's opinion the MRP policy, as set out at Appendix D (Option 4) to the Executive report, be approved to replace the policy approved by Council on 25 February 2016, in order to allow the change in approach to MRP to be applied with effect from the financial year ending 31 March 2017; and***
3. ***that the MRP policy, as outlined in Appendix D (Option 4), be adopted in respect of the Council's financial year ending 31 March 2018, subject to the Council's external auditor's opinion.***

E/16/106. **Improving Care Home Provision for Older People in Central Bedfordshire**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing that set out a new opportunity in Ivel Valley to further improve care home provision.

Oak Manor, Shefford was due to open in September/October 2017 and 30 places were available to the Council's customers. The report sought approval to authorise the commencement of consultation on the closure of The Birches Older Persons Home (OPH), Shefford and find suitable alternative accommodation for the existing residents. One of the options available to residents at The Birches OPH was to relocate to Oak Manor, if they so wished. This would provide the residents with improved living conditions.

Reason for decision: To ensure that prior to making a decision about the future of the home, the Executive would have as much information as possible about the options available and the view of the interested parties.

RESOLVED

1. to recognise and respond to the opportunities to improve care home provision for older people in Ivel Valley by authorising the commencement of formal consultation on proposals for the future of The Birches OPH, as set out in paragraphs 38 to 48 of the report; and
2. to request that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive advising on the outcome of the consultation and making recommendations about the future of the home.

[Note: Councillor Bowater arrived at the beginning of this item.]

E/16/107. **Proposal to make a Prescribed Alteration to Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Education and Skills that sought approval to commence the statutory consultation for the prescribed alterations to the accommodation at Robert Peel Foundation, St Swithuns Voluntary Controlled and John Donne Church of England Lower Schools. All three schools had consulted on a proposed change of age range for each school from 3-9 years to 3-11 years, to be implemented from September 2017, following the agreement of the schools, governors and parents. The Department for Education (DfE) required that the local authority carry out a statutory consultation for those schools that were required to physically enlarge their premises, due to an increase in capacity beyond a threshold as determined by the DfE.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Education and Skills confirmed that there were no capital implications for the Council arising as a result of the proposal. However the schools and their governing bodies would need to manage their budgets especially carefully to accommodate the impact of the physical alterations.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the Council was able to meet all of the legal requirements placed on the Council by the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

RESOLVED

that the commencement of the statutory consultation process for the proposed prescribed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham, be approved.

[Note: Councillor Zerny left the meeting after this item.]

E/16/108. **Proposed Change of Age Range for Shillington Lower School from 4-9 to 2-9 years of age**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Education and Skills that sought approval to commence a statutory consultation for the proposal to change the age range of Shillington Lower School, to integrate a pre-school provision following the closure of the previous pre-school on the last day of the Autumn school term 2016.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the village of Shillington has an early years facility.

RESOLVED

that the statutory process for the proposal to change the age range of Shillington Lower School from 4-9 years to 2-9 years be approved by integrating a pre-school provision from September 2017, namely:

- (i) that publication of the statutory notice be approved;**
- (ii) that the commence of formal consultation of at least four weeks be authorised; and**
- (iii) that the proposal following the representation period of the statutory notice be determined by the Executive on the 4 April 2017.**

E/16/109. Determination of the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2018/19

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Education and Skills that sought approval to determine the Admission Arrangements for 2018/19 for community and voluntary controlled schools for which the Council was responsible. There were proposed changes to the following two schools:

- Shefford Lower School – proposal to move the measuring point of the school; and
- Fairfield Park Lower School – proposal for the creation of priority areas within the catchment area of the school and moving the measuring point.

Concerns had been raised through the consultation about the safety of children walking to the new site at Fairfield Park Lower School. The Executive Member explained that as part of the planning approval for the new site, conditions had been put in place that included measures to mitigate traffic and road safety issues. The Executive Member for Community Services confirmed that he would follow up on the road safety measures. Also there had been concerns about the priority for catchment siblings being split over two sites. The school's governing body had amended the school's catchment sibling criterion to mitigate these concerns.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations to determine its admission arrangements for the academic year 2018/19.

RESOLVED

that the admission arrangements for community and voluntary schools for the academic year 2018/19, including the authority's co-ordinated scheme and religious affiliation supplementary information form, be approved.

E/16/110. **European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) - ESF SEaMLESS Programme**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Education and Skills that provided further detail on the status of the SEaMLESS Consortium European Social Funds (ESF) bid. A programme had been planned to commence in January 2017 for completion on 31 December 2019, subject to approval by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The bid was still currently under consideration by the DWP which would mean the commencement date would be delayed.

Reason for decision: To enable funding to be secured for SEaMLESS as it provided an excellent opportunity to lever in external funding to support vulnerable residents back into employment.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the further detail provided about the SEaMLESS Consortium ESF funding bid, including the budget, outputs, results and targets, and associated impacts and risks to the Council, be noted;**
- 2. to authorise the Council entering into the funding agreement, subject to approval by the DWP for the programme; and**
- 3. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business and the Section 151 Officer to approve any minor amendments to this funding agreement, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and the Executive Member for Education and Skills.**

E/16/111. **Approval to Continue to Fund Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing that sought approval to continue to fund Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire for the next 3 years.

Reason for decision: On the basis that Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire had performed satisfactorily against the Service Level Agreement since 2013, it was proposed that funding continued and that the Service Level Agreement was reviewed and updated to reflect current and future priorities.

RESOLVED

that the funding of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire be approved for a further period of 3 years from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020.

E/16/112. Approval to Procure a New and Enhanced Domiciliary Care Framework Agreement and to Extend the Current Framework Agreement for a Period of 5 Months

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing that sought approval for the procurement of a new domiciliary care framework and domiciliary care contract/s for four courts for a period of 5 years (3 years plus up to 2 one year extensions) and to approve an extension to the current domiciliary care framework contract by 5 months to 30 September 2017.

Reason for decision: The current domiciliary care framework contract for adults and older people ended in April 2017 and the Council needed to procure a new framework contract to ensure that customers who needed care and support at home were able to access these services.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the procurement of a new domiciliary framework contract be approved, with the new arrangement to start on 1 October 2017 with a contract term of 3 years, plus up to 2 one year extensions;**
- 2. that the extension to the current domiciliary care framework contract for a period of 5 months be approved; and**
- 3. that the procurement of domiciliary care contract/s for four Extra Care Courts be approved and that the new contract/s to start on 1 October 2017 with a contract term of 3 years, plus up to 2 one year extensions.**

E/16/113. Exclusion of the 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/16/114. Leisure Management Contract

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Community Services on the future leisure management contract arrangements at Dunstable and Tiddenfoot Leisure Centres and The Grove Theatre.

Reason for decision: To ensure the provision of leisure and cultural services at Dunstable and Tiddenfoot Leisure Centres and The Grove Theatre offer best value in commercial terms and benefits for the community.

RESOLVED

that the recommendations contained in the exempt report, be approved.

E/16/115. **Tender Award for the Contract for Central Heating and Boiler Replacements to Council Housing 2017-2020**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member Social Care and Housing that sought approval of the award of a 3 year contract, extendable by up to a further 3 years, for the Central Heating and Boiler Replacements 2017-2020. The existing contract ended in March 2017.

Reason for decision: The contract would help to ensure that the housing stock was kept in good repair and met tenants' current and future expectations.

RESOLVED

that the award of the most economically and qualitative advantageous tender to contractor A for the replacement of Central Heating Installations and Boilers to Council homes be approved.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.09 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated