



**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

17 June 2010

Dear Councillor

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following additional information:-

6. Questions, Statements and Deputations

The Council has been notified that the Chairman of the Sandy & Beeston Allotment & Leisure Gardens Association will speak in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

7. Petitions

Notification has been received that a further petition will be presented to the Chairman requesting for traffic calming measures in The Ridgeway, Flitwick.

8. Recommendations from the Executive

Please find attached the two recommendations from the Executive meeting held on 8 June 2010 that were marked up as to follow in the agenda:-

	Page No.
Sustainable Community Strategy	3 - 4
Community Engagement Strategy	5 - 6

9. Recommendation from the General Purposes Committee

Please find attached the recommendation from the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 June 2010 that was marked up as to follow in the agenda:-

Page No.

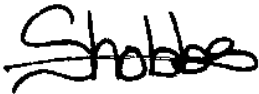
Recommendations of the Boundary Committee for England on the Electoral Review of Central Bedfordshire 7 - 16

10. Recommendations from the Constitution Advisory Group

Also attached at pages 17 to 20 is a revised report from the Constitution Advisory Group on the Call-In of Planning Applications by Members to Development Management Committee (pages 37 – 39 in the agenda).

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Sandra Hobbs on Tel: 0300 300 5257.

Yours sincerely



Sandra Hobbs
Democratic Services Officer
email: sandra.hobbs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 JUNE 2010

Recommendations to Council from the Executive meeting held on 8 June 2010

3. Minute No E/10/17 – Sustainable Community Strategy

The Executive considered a report from Councillor Tricia Turner MBE, Leader of the Council proposing the first Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Central Bedfordshire. The Strategy set out the shared long term vision for the area along with key strategic priorities and actions to be delivered with the aim of improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and people living there.

(NOTE: A copy of the report had been circulated with the Executive agenda to all Councillors.)

The report set out the statutory process that had been carried out with partners and stakeholders to develop the strategy and key priorities. The priorities identified for tackling local quality of life issues, whilst having regard to the government's current priorities for public services, had been set from a clear analysis of local needs. It was noted that the priorities and actions had widespread support from partners and stakeholders.

Members were advised that the shared long term local vision was to ensure that Central Bedfordshire was:

“Globally connected, delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”.

The Strategy's 8 key priorities were:

- (a) Maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities
- (b) Ensuring our local people have the skills to prosper
- (c) Getting around and caring for a green and clean environment
- (d) Supporting and caring for an ageing population and those who are most vulnerable
- (e) Promoting health and reducing health inequalities
- (f) Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
- (g) Keeping our communities safe
- (h) Nurturing a sense of pride and belonging.

During the ensuing general discussion it was noted that the Strategy would be reviewed every year and refreshed every three years to ensure it continued to reflect the priorities for Central Bedfordshire based on the views of residents and the latest available evidence for the area.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council meets its statutory requirement to work in partnership to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy for the area. To ensure partners work together to delivery actions against a shared set of priorities and long-term vision for Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 - 2031, attached as Appendix A to the submitted report, be adopted.

[Please note that the Central Bedfordshire Together Board on the 13 May 2010 endorsed the final draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy for final approval by Council on 24 June 2010.]

Please also note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=15204>

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 JUNE 2010

Recommendations to Council from the Executive meeting held on 8 June 2010

4. Minute No E/10/18 – Community Engagement Strategy

The Executive considered a report from Councillor Richard Stay, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance proposing the final draft of the Community Engagement Strategy and delivery plan. The aim of the strategy was to deliver greater added value to citizens by understanding their needs and issues, providing a greater involvement in the decision-making process and access to public sector services.

(NOTE: A copy of the report had been circulated with the Executive agenda to all Councillors.)

The report outlined how the Strategy had been developed by Central Bedfordshire Together (the Local Strategic Partnership – “LSP”) in discussions with Local Authority officers, Ward Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and partner organisations. Following formal consultation on the Strategy a three year delivery plan had been developed. It was noted that each of the main concerns and issues identified through the consultation process had been taken into consideration. Members were advised that significant progress had already been made in implementing a number of key elements of the delivery plan, as outlined in the submitted report.

The Portfolio Holder drew Members’ attention to the five key principles of the Strategy which, following consultation with partner organisations and staff, had been agreed as:

1. Giving more people more opportunities to influence decisions;
2. Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities;
3. Enhancing the role of Town and Parish Councils;
4. Building the capacity of local people to engage; and
5. Ensuring a strategic and joined-up, co-ordinated partnership approach.

Councillor Stay explained that the Strategy would enable the Council to establish new relationships with individuals and organisations and help communities understand the tough choices and decisions that would have to be made because of the current economic climate. The Strategy would also be used to manage expectations about service levels and the way some services would need to be provided by the public sector in the future. The Strategy also supported the Government’s plans to enable citizens, communities and local government to come together to solve problems and improve their localities.

During the ensuing general discussion, Members discussed the key principle of enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities. Responding to comments about the merit or otherwise of providing each

Councillor with small individual budgets to spend locally in their wards, Councillor Stay explained that this element of the Strategy would enable each Member to have an influence over local expenditure based on community requests, thus enhancing their leadership role in the community. Given that this element of the procedure would have to be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process, the Portfolio Holder moved the following amendment to his recommendation which was duly seconded:-

‘that an additional sentence be added to the second of the five key principles for a successful Community Strategy titled ‘Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities’, detailed at bullet point two on page 61 of the submitted report, to make explicit that providing each Councillor with a budget to spend locally in their wards would be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process.’

Reason for decision: To enable the Local Authority and its partners to deliver greater added value to our citizens by understanding their needs and issues, and giving them a greater involvement in the decision-making process and access to public sector services. The strategy and delivery plan are based on developing a joined-up, strategic and co-ordinated partnership approach, which is consistent with our aspirations for Total Place.

RESOLVED

that an additional sentence be added to the second of the five key principles for a successful Community Strategy titled ‘Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities’, detailed at bullet point two on page 61 of the submitted report, to make explicit that providing each Councillor with a budget to spend locally in their wards would be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Community Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2013 and its proposed delivery plan, as amended in resolution 1 above and attached as Appendices A & B to the submitted report, be adopted, with the Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement working thereafter with directorates and partners to implement the Strategy.

[Please note that the Central Bedfordshire Together Board on the 13 May 2010 endorsed the final draft of the Community Engagement Strategy for final approval by Council on 24 June 2010.]

**[Please note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=15203>]**

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 JUNE 2010

**Recommendations to Council from the General Purposes Committee meeting
held on 3 June 2010**

**1. Minute No GPC/10/7 - Recommendations of the Boundary Committee for
England on the Electoral Review of Central Bedfordshire**

The Committee received a report and verbal update from the Electoral and Members' Services Manager on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council'.

The meeting noted that although published on 17 May 2010, the document itself had only been received by the Council on 2 June. The meeting further noted that a response to the draft recommendations had to be submitted to the Commission by 12 July. As such, approval was sought to delegate authority for the preparation of a draft submission in response to the Commission's proposals to Council on 24 June 2010.

Members were advised that the Council was only one of many consultees and other views and comments would be submitted to the Commission at the same time as those expressed by this Authority.

The Chairman of the Council's Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, which had met the previous day to consider the Commission's draft recommendations, reported verbally on the Group's discussions. The Committee noted that the Group had, in particular, focused on the Commission's recommendations relating to Sandy, which involved a proposed three Member ward to include Blunham. Additionally, the Committee noted that the Commission had recommended a change to the pattern of wards for Dunstable, which differed to that submitted by Central Bedfordshire Council, and which involved a proposed extension to the Northfields ward to form a two Member ward. Whilst willing to accept the Commission's recommendation for Dunstable, the Working Group was unable to support that relating to Sandy as it was felt that Blunham lacked ties to Sandy and was closer in this respect to Moggerhanger. As such it was felt that the Council should object to the Commission's recommendation on Sandy and seek support for this position through consultation with Members and neighbouring parish councils.

The Chairman of the Working Group also referred to errors in the Commission's document relating to the ratio of Councillors with the number of electors in Biggleswade and to the number of Councillors at Leighton-Linslade Town Council.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the conclusions reached by the Council's Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group with regard to the content of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council', as presented by the Chairman of the Group, be supported and consultation be carried out with both Members and neighbouring parish councils regarding the Commission's proposals to include the village of Blunham within a ward in Sandy;**

2. **that the Director of Customer and Shared Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and the Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, be authorised to prepare the draft submission as the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council' including taking account of any further responses to consultation received in the intervening period prior to the Council meeting on 24 June 2010 at which the draft submission is to be presented.**

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that Council consider any responses received from town and parish councils;***
2. ***that Council approve the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council';***
3. ***that the Director of Customer and Shared Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group, be authorised to respond to any questions from the Local Government Boundary Commission raised in connection with the submission.***

[Please note that a copy of the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire' is attached at Appendix A.]

Please also note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=617&MId=3355&Ver=4>

Appendix A

Response to the: *Draft New
Electoral Arrangements for
Central Bedfordshire Council*



1. INTRODUCTION

This submission presents the response to the *Draft Recommendations* for the number and location of electoral wards for the Central Bedfordshire unitary authority.

Whilst remaining firmly of the opinion that a council size of 60 would be more appropriate to meet the needs of our communities we nevertheless welcome the fact that the Committee has agreed the majority of our submission on the pattern of wards by accepting some 29 of the 31 wards proposed.

2. SANDY WARD

Sandy (Fallowfield Ward), Sandy (Beeston Ward), Old Warden, Blunham, Southill, Moggerhanger, Northill

We note with interest the conclusion of the Committee in respect of the proposals put forward for Sandy town and its hinterland but would contend that our original submission still remains the best option for the communities in this area.

We would very much refute the suggestion that there is a community link between Blunham and Sandy parishes and to incorporate Blunham within a 3 member ward for Sandy will simply see the interests of the residents of Blunham overtaken by the pressing needs of a thriving urban community.

The village of Blunham has less than 800 residents who maintain a rural lifestyle, they have a very close connection with the neighbouring parish of Moggerhanger as well as a natural affinity to Great Barford in the adjoining borough council area. Indeed, the infant and middle schools in Blunham and Great Barford serve both parishes and it would not be unusual for a secondary school placement to be sought in Biggleswade rather than Sandy.

In respect of children's activity groups such as the Cubs, Brownies and Beavers the parish would have its own groups however whenever there are insufficient numbers to maintain a particular children's group then membership and interest has transferred to Great Barford. The churches within Great Barford and Blunham are served by the same vicar.

In the majority of cases a shopping trip from Blunham would be to the nearby town of Bedford and not Sandy. Moreover, the plethora of events run in the nearby Moggerhanger Park is fully supported by the residents of Blunham. Indeed, the local football team is from the combined villages of Blunham and Moggerhanger.

The parish of Blunham is a thriving community that intertwines its country activities with its immediate rural neighbours and we would very much re-enforce our proposal of combining the parishes of Old Warden, Blunham, Southill, Moggerhanger and Northill together with the two adjoining town

wards of Sandy (Fallowfield) and Sandy (Beeston) to make a two-member ward to reflect the interests and identities of the local community.

Northhill

Parish	2013 electorate	Variance
Sandy (Fallowfield Ward)	1465	
Sandy (Beeston Ward)	665	
Old Warden	262	
Blunham	802	
Southill (Stanford Ward)	200	
Southill (Broom Ward)	467	
Southill (Southill Ward)	266	
Moggerhanger	508	
Northhill	1837	
Total	6472	
Divided by 2 members	3236	-8.09%

Acceptance of the above argument would mean that Sandy itself would become a two-member ward thus:

Sandy

Parish	2013 electorate	Variance
Sandy (Ivel Ward)	2840	
Sandy (Pinnacle Ward)	3900	
Total	6740	
Divided by 2 members	3370	-4.28%

3. DUNSTABLE

The combination of our proposed single member wards of Beecroft and Northfields is duly noted. The Council's submission sought to achieve, where appropriate, single member representation and concluded that whilst the pattern submitted did in fact separate a part of the Beecroft estate the extensive development within the north of the ward would eventually reflect a distinctly different community and sought to identify it as such. Nevertheless, we have no major objections to the Committee's proposal of a 2-member Northfields ward.

4 PARISH ELECTORAL ARRANGMENTS

We agree in general with your proposals in respect of the four town councils you have considered but would suggest in three cases that more equal ratios of electors to councillors could be achieved by adjusting the number of councillors per ward.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

In respect of the recommendations for Biggleswade Town Council parish wards we are unsure as to why the Committee has sought to have a disproportionate electoral representation at town council level and we would recommend the following:

Parish Ward	Members
Ivel	7
Stratton	5
Holme	3
Total	15

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

In respect of the recommendations for Dunstable Town Council parish wards we are unsure as to why the Committee has sought to have a disproportionate electoral representation at town council level and we would recommend the following:

Parish Ward	Members
Central	3
Icknield	5
Northfields	5
Manshead	3
Watling	5
Total	21

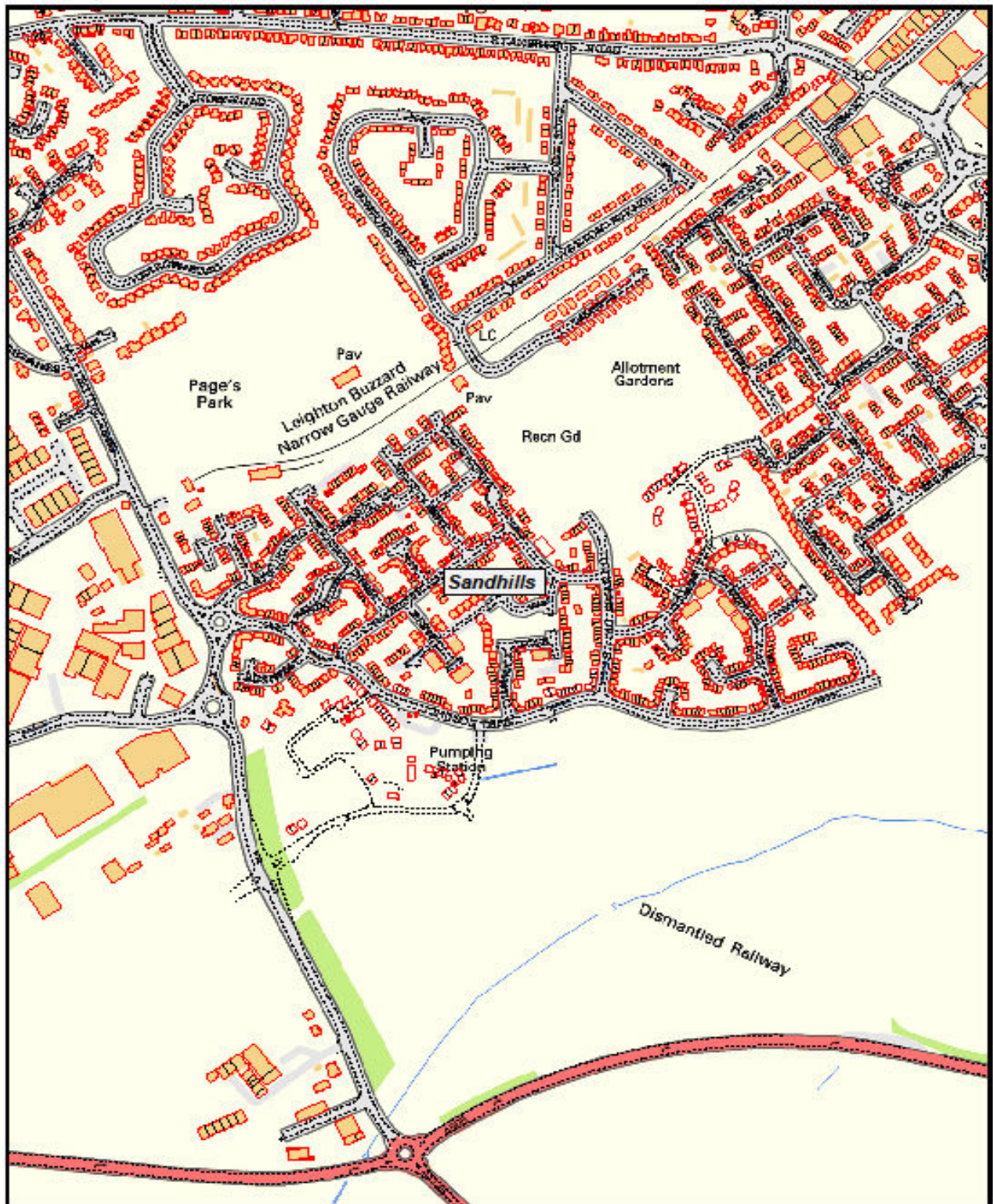
LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

The draft recommendations for Leighton-Linslade indicate that the town council has currently 20 members; this is fact incorrect. At the last electoral review of the former South Bedfordshire District Council area in 2002, it was recommended that the extensive development in the south east of the town be included in the Grovebury ward. Consequently, a request was received from the town council to increase the number of councillors to 21. This was approved at a later date by South Bedfordshire DC.

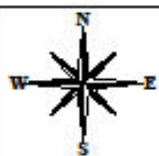
Here town council wards could be aligned with the new Central Bedfordshire wards which are based on clearly identifiable boundaries. This would give 3 wards each with 7 town councillors which would have the advantages of clarity and simplicity. But we consider that 7 Councillors per ward is too many in this context and therefore on balance would prefer to see some of the current town ward boundaries used to subdivide the three Unitary Wards as indeed you have proposed. Again we would recommend the following to achieve much better equality of ratios of councillors to electors than in your draft:

Parish Ward	Members
Grovebury	5
Sandhills	2
Linslade	3
Plantation	5
Planets	2
Southcott	4
Total	21

It should be noted that we have introduced a sub-division of the Leighton Buzzard South Ward into Grovebury and Sandhills. Sandhills is distinct from the rest of the ward. Access to the suburb is only from Billington Road and there is no through road to any other part of the Unitary ward. Consequently, this new parish ward would be able to reflect a clear community identity in line with that already recognised by the retention of the Planets ward. Grovebury is an existing ward name applying to most of the rest of Leighton Buzzard South.



Sandhills Area, Leighton Buzzard



Date: 15 June 2010

Scale 1:6500

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Central Bedfordshire

5. WARD NAMES

We note that all of the town wards with the exception of Houghton Regis have the name of the town incorporated into the title consequently we recommend the following changes:

Houghton Regis –Tithe Farm

Houghton Regis - Parkside

Houghton Regis – Houghton Hall

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, we are pleased to see that the majority of the Council's views have been incorporated into the draft recommendations and would submit that in the case of Sandy and the parish of Blunham we have given demonstrable evidence that our original submission is the most appropriate solution for the communities involved. Regarding town councils our proposed adjustments to numbers of councillors per ward would achieve much greater equality of representation by moving much closer to equality of ratios of councillors to electors.

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Recommendation to Council 24 June 2010	From: Constitution Advisory Group	On: 1 June 2010
<p align="center">CALL-IN OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS BY MEMBERS TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</p>		
<p>1.</p>	<p>Council is asked to approve the following recommendation:-</p> <p><i>that Part H section 4.3.95.1 of the Constitution be amended by the insertion of the words “and supported by the planning reason(s)” after the words “on an agreed pro forma” .</i></p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>The relevant section of the Constitution showing the proposed amendment is set out at Appendix A.</p>	
<p>Background</p>		
<p>2.</p>	<p>The Constitution Advisory Group at its meeting on 1 June 2010 considered a proposal to require the planning reason(s) to be provided when a ward councillor calls-in a planning application to Development Management Committee.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>The Advisory Group noted that Members tended to do so but that there was currently no requirement for this stated in the Constitution.</p>	
<p>Reason for Recommendation</p>		
<p>4.</p>	<p>Development Management Committee can only take into account relevant planning issues when determining an application. Providing the reason(s) at the stage of call-in allows officers to give consideration to the matter when preparing the report and inform the recommendations accordingly. Members of the Committee are then able to have due regard to the planning considerations when considering the application.</p>	

Please note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:
[http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/Published/C0000651/M00003430/AI00019309/\\$100601item5PlanningReasonsDMCReferral.docA.ps.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/Published/C0000651/M00003430/AI00019309/$100601item5PlanningReasonsDMCReferral.docA.ps.pdf)

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Appendix A

Proposed amendment to Part H3 of the Constitution

4.3.95.1 A ward member of the Council requests in writing, on an agreed pro forma **and supported by the planning reasons** within 3 weeks of it being registered, for it to be referred to a meeting of the Development Management Committee. The Member making a call-in is required to speak about the reasons for the call-in at the Committee where the application may be considered¹

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1. A Member may withdraw a request by notifying the Assistant Director Development **Management** no later than six clear working days before the date of the Committee meeting.

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