

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Thursday, 16 September 2010.

PRESENT

Cllr P Hollick (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	T Green	Cllrs	Ms J Nunn
	R A Baker		Mrs D B Gurney		P Rawcliffe
	A R Bastable		Mrs C Hegley		A A J Rogers
	L Birt		J G Jamieson		A Shadbolt
	P A Blaine		K Janes		K Sharer
	D Bowater		R W Johnstone		P Snelling
	A D Brown		D Jones		Miss A Sparrow
	J A E Clarke		M R Jones		B J Spurr
	N B Costin		J Kane		R C Stay
	I Dalgarno		D J Lawrence		J Street
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		Mrs A M Lewis		A M Turner
	P A Duckett		S F Male		Mrs C Turner
	Dr R Egan		K C Matthews		Mrs P E Turner MBE
	A Fahn		Ms C Maudlin		P F Vickers
	Mrs J Freeman		D McVicar		B Wells
	Mrs R B Gammons		J Murray		P Williams
	M Gibson		Mrs M Mustoe		J N Young
	Mrs S A Goodchild		T Nicols		
	Ms A M W Graham		A Northwood		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	D J Gale	Cllrs	H J Lockey
	R D Berry		D J Hopkin		G Summerfield
	P Freeman		Mrs J G Lawrence		

Officers in Attendance:	Mr G Alderson	–	Director of Sustainable Communities
	Mr J Atkinson	–	Head of Legal Services
	Mr M Bowmer	–	Assistant Director, Financial Services/Chief Finance Officer
	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Mr R Ellis	–	Director of Customer and Shared Services
	Mrs E Grant	–	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
	Mrs S Hobbs	–	Democratic Services Officer
	Mrs J Ogley	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Ms M Peaston	–	Interim Committee Services Manager

Prayers

Prayers were taken by Reverend John Harper, Rural Dean of Shefford.

C/10/33 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 June 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

C/10/34 Members' Interests

(a) Personal Interests:-

None.

(b) Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-

None.

C/10/35 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

In noting Councillor Gale's apologies for absence due to ill health, the Chairman indicated that he would pass the Council's best wishes on to him.

Members stood in silence for one minute in respect for the memory of the former Attorney General Lord Lyell who had died at the end of August. Lord Lyell had represented Mid-Bedfordshire from 1983 and North-East Bedfordshire from 1997 until he retired from the House of Commons in 2001.

The Chairman acknowledged receipt of a book from East Lothian Council. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services had hosted a visit of Officers from East Lothian Council and staff from the Education Innovation Unit. East Lothian Council were about to consult with their schools on encouraging Trusts, Federations and Partnerships in their own schools. They had heard from the Innovation Unit which exists to share good practice across Councils that Central Bedfordshire Council were further on with this approach as part of the Council's agreed Education Vision.

The Chairman had attended 28 civic duties since becoming Chairman. The Chairman highlighted the following events:

- an award ceremony with the Lord Lieutenant at Stotfold Mill to present volunteers with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service after rebuilding the Mill due to a fire; and

- Central Bedfordshire Canine Trust in Kensworth to present an award for the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme.

The Anglia in Bloom results had been announced and it was noted that Dunstable had won the gold award in the category for Large Towns and Leighton-Linslade had won the silver award. Dunstable had also won a special award for Best New Entry. The flowers could be viewed at the Dunstable Town Fayre on 18 September 2010 which was being held in Priory Gardens.

Monday 18 October 2010 would be the first UK annual Anti-Slavery Day. The Chairman commented on the petition that had been launched by Ecpat UK and the Body Shop, a campaign to end the sexual exploitation of children.

The Chairman indicated that he would be hosting a Reception at Priory House on Friday 24 September 2010 and a Charity Golf Day at Dunstable Downs Golf Club on Thursday 7 October 2010. He hoped that Members would support these events.

Members were advised that agenda item 16 'Establishment of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee' had been withdrawn as the Constitution provided that the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman could appoint Members to a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

C/10/36

Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader of the Council reported on the development of a proposal for a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), taking into account functional economic geography, covering the South East Midlands. The initial proposal for the LEP had to be submitted to the Government by 6 September 2010.

The Leader referred to a workshop at the Rufus Centre to discuss the funding of public services. She commented that the outcomes from the workshop could assist the Council in setting future budgets.

C/10/37

Questions, Statements or Deputations

No questions, statements or deputations had been received under Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

C/10/38

Petitions

The Chairman reminded Members that the Constitution stated that petitions relating to any planning decision could not be discussed at Council. The Chairman of the Development Management Committee indicated that he had received a petition from Langford Parish Council. The petition was against the erection of a wind farm at Langford and had been signed by 1,302 people. He advised the Council that the petition would be passed to the planning case officer.

C/10/39 **Recommendation from the Executive**

Executive Arrangements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 13 July 2010. The recommendation concerned the requirement to pass a resolution by 31 December 2010 if the Council wished to adopt the “new style” leader and cabinet executive arrangements. Members noted that the majority of requirements of the “new style” leader and cabinet executive were already in place further to wide consultation which had taken place both with the public and key stakeholders as part of the case for unitary government in Central Bedfordshire.

It was noted that the Council at its meeting on 25 November 2010 would determine which model to adopt but that at present it was minded to retain the “new style” leader and cabinet model.

RESOLVED

that Council is minded, subject to consideration of views received, to pass a resolution at its meeting on 25 November 2010 to adopt the “new style” leader and cabinet executive arrangements for implementation on the third day after the elections in May 2011.

C/10/40 **Recommendations from the Constitution Advisory Group**

(a) Code of Conduct for Officers – Hospitality and Gifts

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 13 July 2010 which proposed an amendment to the Constitution to show more stringent arrangements for the acceptance of gifts and hospitality by officers.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to:

- amend 5.2 after the word “gift” by inserting the words “hospitality, or the offer of a gift or hospitality”;
- amend 5.3 after the word “hospitality” on line 2 insert the words “offered and/or”; and
- amend 5.3 on line 5 after the first “the” insert the words “offer and/or”.

On a vote by a show of hands the amendment was declared to be **lost** and the recommendation was then put.

RESOLVED

that Part F3 section 5 of the Constitution be amended to reflect more stringent arrangements covering the acceptance of gifts and hospitality by officers, as set out in the proposed wording shown at Appendix A to the report.

(b) Review of Consultation and Negotiation Arrangements with the Professional Associations

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 13 July 2010 concerning the removal of the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for primary and secondary education from the Constitution and the inclusion of details of the Joint Consulting and Negotiation Forum.

RESOLVED

- 1. to remove the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for primary and secondary education (JCNC) from the Constitution at sections E2 10 and E2 7 paragraph 7.1.5; and**
- 2. to add a new paragraph 7.1.6 at Part E as set out in Appendix A to the report.**

C/10/41

Recommendation from the General Purposes Committee

Designation of Monitoring Officer

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 24 August 2010 which sought approval to the post of Head of Legal and Democratic Services being designated as Monitoring Officer and that the post report directly to the Director of Customer and Shared Services.

RESOLVED

that the post of Head of Legal and Democratic Services be designated as Monitoring Officer and that the post report directly to the Director of Customer and Shared Services.

C/10/42

Report of the Bedfordshire Police Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire Police Authority held on 16 July 2010 was submitted.

Councillor Hollick, representative of the Police Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report including the status of proposals for joint working between Bedfordshire Police Authority and Hertfordshire Police Authority.

Members were advised of Bedfordshire Police's proposals for engaging with residents to set neighbourhood policing priorities. The scope for a broader partnership-led approach to community engagement had been presented to the Central Bedfordshire Together Board (the Local Strategic Partnership Board) on 2 September 2010. The Vice-Chairman suggested that it might be useful if the minutes of this meeting were circulated.

With effect from 1 October, the current 33 neighbourhood policing areas would be reduced to 7. Members were concerned that these new arrangements had not been communicated as effectively as they might have been.

Members also raised concerns about drivers using their mobile phones and commented that this issue should be pursued by the police as a priority.

Councillor Hollick indicated that he would feed back Members' concerns to the Police Authority.

C/10/43

Reports of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority held on 30 April 2010 was submitted.

Councillor Street, representative of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report. In response to a question, Councillor Street advised Members that the Fire Authority was reviewing its plans for responding to flooding.

C/10/44

Written Questions

Councillor Blaine had submitted a written question about fly tipping. The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles had tabled a written response, as set out below:

1. How many prosecutions had Central Bedfordshire Council initiated for fly tipping since its inception and what other actions had been taken against offenders?

Since 1 April 2009 up to 9 July 2010, 158 complaints connected to fly tipping were received by the Envirocrime team. Of these:

- 8 resulted in a warning letter formal caution, fixed penalty notice
- 40 resulted in guidance and advice/education given under the Environmental Protection Act and no further action

- 12 were ongoing cases.

There had been no prosecutions or fixed penalty notices for fly tipping by waste services during this time. However, the Council was involved in investigating and removing fly tips which were generally the smaller ones where no evidence had been found as to who may be responsible for the waste.

2. What action does the Council intend to take in future to discourage this offensive practice?

Both community safety and waste services were working together to identify fly tips, collate evidence and take proportionate enforcement action including fixed penalty notices or prosecution. This close liaison would continue through the Council's work on developing a visible presence.

The Portfolio Holder explained that a report on 'visible presence' would be considered at the meeting of the Executive on 29 September 2010.

C/10/45

Oral Questions

The Chairman presided over oral questions asked of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders, the Chairman of a Committee or a Member representing the Bedfordshire Police Authority or the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority under Council Procedure Rule 12.7.

- 1) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about the Council's responsibility towards members of the public falling in the snow.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised Members that it depended on the individual case at the time.

- 2) Councillor Stay asked a question about the scale of reduction in Government funding, over the next 5 years, that would face Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People explained that it was anticipated that the national reduction over the next 4 years would be 25%. Central Bedfordshire Council had realised £10m efficiency savings during its first year, and was working to deliver a further £12m of savings during 2010/11. The savings target needed for 2011/12 would be of the order of £15m. Further information would be known once the Government had announced its findings from the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October 2010.

- 3) Councillor Snelling asked a question about the Section 106 funding designated for a new lower school in the south Leighton Buzzard development.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services confirmed that at the current time there were no plans for a new lower school in Leighton Buzzard. Members were advised that a review of all schools in Leighton Buzzard was due to take place during the Spring Term in 2011. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development acknowledged that there was funding in the Section 106 Agreement for the south Leighton Buzzard development for a new school. The funding would not be utilised for a school until a certain number of dwellings had been completed.

- 4) Councillor Murray asked a question about the scope for Chief Executives to manage more than one council.

The Leader of the Council explained that she did not feel this was a viable option for Central Bedfordshire.

- 5) Councillor Aldis asked a question about the completion of the office refurbishment at Priory House.

The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Systems and Assets advised Members that the Your Space project was coming to an end. There was currently a surplus of office equipment which was being temporarily stored, but this was shortly due to be removed as were the packing crates. The Portfolio Holder commended the Officers who had taken forward the Your Space project.

- 6) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about improving the process of submitting oral questions at Council.

The Chairman of the Constitution Advisory Group confirmed that he would consider the suggestions made.

- 7) Councillor Aldis asked a question about proposals for the concessionary fares scheme to be ineligible for journeys travelled before 9.30 a.m.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised that the Council was reviewing the Local Transport Policy and the findings would be reported to a future meeting of the Executive.

- 8) Councillor Snelling asked a question about the relocation of employees and the cost of the resultant travel expenses.

The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Systems and Assets explained that the Your Spaces moves would increase the efficiencies of the Council by bringing service areas together. These moves had been carried out in an effective and efficient way.

- 9) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about Connexions closing down through lack of funding and the impact this would have.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services confirmed that due to the Government's removal of Area Based Grant staff in the Youth Service, including the Connexions were being consulted on restructuring proposals.

- 10) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about bus companies carrying mobility scooters.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles confirmed that he would pursue this issue with the bus companies.

- 11) Councillor Mrs Gurney asked a question about retained fire stations being closed.

The representative of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority confirmed he was not aware of any retained fire stations being closed.

C/10/46 **Motions**

No motions had been received from Members of the Council under Rule No. 16.

C/10/47 **Establishment of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

This item had been withdrawn as the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman could appoint Members to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.01 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated