

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford on Monday, 17 January 2011.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney	Cllrs	Ms J Nunn
	R A Baker		Mrs C Hegley		P Rawcliffe
	Mrs A Barker		D J Hopkin		A A J Rogers
	A R Bastable		J G Jamieson		J A G Saunders
	R D Berry		K Janes		A Shadbolt
	L Birt		R W Johnstone		K Sharer
	P A Blaine		D Jones		P Snelling
	D Bowater		M R Jones		Miss A Sparrow
	A D Brown		J Kane		B J Spurr
	J A E Clarke		D J Lawrence		R C Stay
	N B Costin		Mrs J G Lawrence		J Street
	I Dalgarno		Mrs A M Lewis		G Summerfield
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		H J Lockey		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
	P Freeman		J Murray		P Williams
	Mrs S A Goodchild		Mrs M Mustoe		J N Young
	T Green		T Nicols		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	D J Gale	Cllrs	M Gibson	Cllrs	A Northwood
	Mrs R B Gammons		Ms A M W Graham		

Officers in Attendance:	Mr G Alderson	–	Director of Sustainable Communities
	Mr J Atkinson	–	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Mr M Bowmer	–	Assistant Director, Financial Services/Chief Finance Officer
	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Mrs M Clampitt	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs S Hobbs	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs J Ogley	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mr J Unsworth	–	Interim Assistant Director of Finance

C/10/63 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 November 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to:

- **an amendment to minute C/10/59 'Written Questions' the last two sentences in the last paragraph to read:**

“Biggleswade Town Council had been consulted in March 2010 about The Baulk/London Road junction when the initial designs were being drawn up and they would be able to comment through the public consultation, along with other organisations and the public. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development confirmed that he had visited the Elm Way junction concerned as part of his work on Safer Routes to School.”

C/10/64 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

Councillor K Sharer declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 'Recommendations from the Constitution Advisory Group' as he was the Chairman of the Leighton Linlade Town Centres Management Committee.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

C/10/65 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised Members that the Vice-Chairman and Councillors Gale and Northwood were recovering from their illnesses and had started to attend meetings.

The Chairman was hosting his Civic Service at 3.30 pm on 23 January 2011 at Priory Church, Dunstable. He advised Members that tickets were available for 'Lets Face the Music' at Grove Theatre on 27 March 2011, an event that the Chairman was hosting.

The Chairman advised Members that his nominated charities were small local groups within Central Bedfordshire and that he had started to distribute monies to various local groups.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Members for their wishes during her period of illness.

C/10/66 **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader highlighted the successful Town and Parish Council Conference held on 13 January 2011 which had been addressed by the new Chief Constable, Alf Hitchcock. The Community Engagement Team had organised Let's Talk Together meetings across Central Bedfordshire and Members were encouraged to support these.

The Leader had attended a function at 10 Downing Street on Monday 17 January 2011.

The Leader explained that a Member Reference Group was looking at how best to enable communities to take on services which this Council was unlikely to be able to provide in the future. Encouraging discussions had taken place with some town councils already.

The Leader recorded her thanks to the Assistant Director Financial Services, Matt Bowmer, who would be leaving the Council in February to work for Northamptonshire County Council. Members wished Mr Bowmer a successful future. The Chairman allowed Mr Bowmer to respond.

C/10/67 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

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

C/10/68 **Petitions**

In accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution, the Council received notification of four petitions.

1. No to Bushwood Green

Councillor Stay presented a petition 'No to Bushwood Green' containing 1,816 signatures.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Stay for introducing the petition. The Chairman reminded Members that the Constitution stipulated that petitions relating to any planning decision could not be discussed at Council. The Chairman explained that the petition would be passed to the Joint Technical Unit who were preparing the Luton and Southern Central Bedfordshire Joint Core Strategy.

The Council agreed that the next three petitions would be debated for 10 minutes following their introduction, as they each contained more than 1,250 signatures.

2. School Crossing Patrols

Councillor Male presented the following 5 petitions containing a total number of 3,323 signatures:

- Retain School Crossing Patrols in Central Bedfordshire – Flitwick (paper petition)
- Save our Local Lollipop Lady – Flitwick (paper petition)
- Oppose the Council's Decision to Remove Our School Crossing Patrol in Ampthill. Keep our Lollipop Lady (paper petition)
- Vote No to Proposed Cut of All School Crossings (e-petition)
- Save your Lollipop Crossing Lady – Biggleswade (paper petition)

Councillor Male explained that the Executive on 11 January had been presented with two further petitions in relation to the School Crossing Patrols in Harlington and Maulden. The Chairman thanked Councillor Male for introducing the petitions. Members debated the petition which would be taken into consideration when setting the budget for 2011/12.

3. Opposition to the Closure of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre

Ms Hudgell presented a petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, opposing the closure of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre. The Executive had received the petition on 11 January 2011 but due to the number of signatories it had been referred to Council for debate. The paper petition contained in excess of 1,300 signatures and the e-petition contained 268 signatures. Ms Hudgell explained that the Leisure Centre was fully utilised by the local community and sports clubs. She also commented that if the Leisure Centre was to close, the specialist sports clubs would have to close too.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hudgell for introducing the petition. Members debated the petition and the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles explained that all funding options were being explored, but no decision had yet been made about the future of the Leisure Centre.

4. Stop the Proposed Service Cuts targeted at Teenagers and Young People

Mr Keir, the nominated representative from the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament presented a petition against the proposed service cuts affecting teenagers and young people. The petition contained over 1,800 signatures from adults and young people across Central Bedfordshire. He contended that the loss of youth services, youth workers and Connexions advisors would mean that young people would have reduced access to impartial guidance, information and advice and positive activities across Central Bedfordshire.

The Chairman thanked Mr Keir for introducing the petition. Members debated the petition and comments would be taken into consideration when setting the budget for 2011/12.

The petitioners for petitions 2, 3 and 4 above were advised that the Executive had not yet decided whether to include any of the savings proposals to which the petitions related in the budget for 2011/12 which would be presented to Council on 24 February 2011. The proposals would be considered alongside efficiency savings and other service reconfiguration and reduction proposals when the Executive framed its recommendations to Council. During the process, the Executive would take note of the representations made in the petitions received. A definitive response to the requests made in the petitions could not be given but the lead petitioners would be advised in due course what the Executive planned to do.

C/10/69

Recommendations from the Executive

Local Government Business Growth Reserve to support Town Centre Regeneration

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 7 December 2010 proposing that £1.5 million of capital be used to support the acquisition of the Quadrant Shopping Centre to deliver the regeneration of Dunstable Town Centre.

RESOLVED

that £1.5 million of capital be used to support the acquisition of the Quadrant Shopping Centre to deliver the regeneration of Dunstable Town Centre and that £1.5 million from the £1.791 million earmarked reserve be transferred into the Redundancy Reserve; with £291,000 of the remaining earmarked reserve retained to cover the further costs of the delivery of the Dunstable Town Centre Masterplan.

C/10/70

Recommendations from the Constitution Advisory Group

(a) Replacement of Leighton Linlade Town Centres Management Committee with Leighton Linlade Partnership Committee

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 2 December 2010 that the Leighton Linlade Town Centres Management Committee be replaced with the Leighton Linlade Partnership Committee.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Leighton Linlade Town Centres Management Committee be replaced with the Leighton Linlade Partnership Committee; and**

2. **that section J2 of the Constitution relating to Leighton Linlade Town Centres Management Committee be amended with new terms of reference as set out at Appendix A to the submitted report.**

(b) Licensing and Regulation Committees – One Committee

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 2 December 2010 that the Licensing and Regulation Committees becomes one committee called the Licensing Committee. The Licensing Committee would carry out the functions currently delegated to both the Licensing Committee and the Regulation Committee.

RESOLVED

1. **that one committee called the Licensing Committee would carry out the functions currently delegated to both the Licensing Committee and the Regulation Committee, but that this should not come into effect until after the May 2011 local election; and**
2. **that section E2 of the Constitution relating to the Licensing Committee and the Regulation Committee be replaced with new terms of reference as set out in Appendix A to the submitted report.**

(c) Amendments to the Delegations of the Director of Customer and Shared Services

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 2 December 2010 that the delegations of the Director of Customer and Shared Services be amended in respect of assets to simplify and clarify the process.

RESOLVED

that section H3 of the Constitution setting out the delegations to the Director of Customer and Shared Services be amended as set out in Appendix A to the submitted report.

C/10/71

Report of the Bedfordshire Police Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire Police Authority held on 20 January 2011 was submitted.

Councillor Hollick, representative on the Police Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report including the provisional budget settlement for 2011/12.

Councillor Hollick responded to questions from Members. The Police Authority had drawn up Programme 2011 which would deliver significant financial savings. In addition the Force had placed a freeze on police officer recruitment and was holding police officer staff vacancies to reduce expenditure in the current year and provide savings in future years.

In response to a question with regard to the performance targets not being met in 2010/11 for areas such as domestic burglary and crime investigation, Councillor Hollick explained that some targets were designed to be challenging. Dedicated investigation teams for crimes such as burglary, robbery and vehicle crime were now in place across Bedfordshire.

C/10/72

Report of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority held on 9 September 2010 was submitted.

Councillor Street, representative on the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report. The proposed East of England Regional Control Centre had been abandoned and the Service's current mobilising system would be improved. Members were advised that the Fire Authority were proposing a nil increase in Band D Council Tax.

Councillor Street responded to questions from Members. He explained that L4Ps were 4 x 4 vehicles and two had been donated to Shuttleworth Airfield Volunteer Fire Service. Three redundant rescue pumps had been donated to the Onset Trust who had donated them to Kenya.

Members were advised that discussions were ongoing in relation to localism of the Fire Service and a scheme would be rolled out to certain areas.

Councillor Street confirmed that the Fire Service continued to carry out fire prevention work with schools and homeowners.

C/10/73

Written Questions

No written questions had been received from Members of the Council under Rule No. 12.2.

C/10/74

Open Questions

The Chairman presided over open questions asked of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and the Chairman of a Committee under Council Procedure Rule 12.7

- 1) Councillor Duckett asked a question about restoring the double yellow lines in Bedford Street, Amptill. Chronic congestion was being caused as well as safety risks.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised Members that he would look into the problem as soon as possible.

- 2) Councillor Lawrence asked a question about contributions to the Internal Drainage Board and sought assurance about this Council's position.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development acknowledges the work of the Internal Drainage Board and that funding for the Board would be allocated in the draft budget.

- 3) Councillor Murray asked a question about the Council's policy on Officers responding to Members queries.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People advised Councillor Murray that he would follow up Councillor Murray's query.

- 4) Councillor Mrs Barker asked a question about an unsigned letter she had received from a Central Bedfordshire Council employee.

The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Systems and Assets explained that there was a Confidential Reporting Code ("Whistleblowing) policy available to employees. The Portfolio Holder advised Members that he would respond to all the issues raised in the letter and would circulate the response to all Members.

- 5) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about the Government's plan to remove the mobility component of the disability living allowance from disabled people living in residential homes and had the Council been in contact with care home residents to carry out an assessment of need for community care services.

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Health agreed to provide Councillor Dr Egan with a written response.

- 6) Councillor Duckett asked a question about the imminent announcement by the Planning Inspector on the Local Development Framework (LDF). Councillor Duckett sought assurance that the site specific timelines within the LDF would be adhered to in the light of current development in Amptill and the impact on infrastructure.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development confirmed that the LDF would be observed. The LDF timetable was a current requirement of the Council.

- 7) Councillor Blaine asked a question about the number of redundancies Central Bedfordshire Council anticipated it would make in the present financial year and also in 2011/12.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People explained that employees were being consulted in line with statutory requirements. He advised Members that the number of redundancies was dependant on the outcome of the budget setting process, which would be approved by Council on 24 February, but it was estimated that there could be of the order of 250 posts lost.

- 8) Councillor Snelling asked a question about opportunities to trade services as opposed to charging for services.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People advised Members that Central Bedfordshire Council had not looked into trading services, but there were opportunities to consider this in the future.

- 9) Councillor Dr Egan asked a question about the Information Commission Office (ICO) charging the Council £35 for each councillor plus a sum of £500. Councillor Dr Egan queried what this money was for and what the consequence would be if the Council refused to pay.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People advised Members that he would look into this.

- 10) Councillor Snelling asked a question about families in need of respite care and what assurances could be given about sustaining the level of provision in Central Bedfordshire.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services advised Members that the funding the Council had would be directed towards vulnerable people.

C/10/75 **Motions**

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

C/10/76 **Variations to Membership of Committees**

The Council considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People about the changes to the membership of Committees which had occurred since the last meeting.

NOTED

the changes to the membership of Committees as set out in the submitted report.

C/10/77 **Calendar of Meetings 2011/12**

The Council considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People seeking approval of the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2011-2012. The Portfolio Holder moved an amendment to include two Development Management Committees on 23 May and 20 June 2012. Members suggested further amendments in relation to the timing of the Audit Committee.

It was proposed that minor amendments be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People and this was duly seconded.

RESOLVED

that the proposed Calendar of Meetings 2011/12 be approved subject to minor amendments being delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People.

C/10/78 **Appointment of S151 Officer**

The Council considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People that proposed that the Director of Customer and Shared Services be authorised to make an interim appointment to the position of Chief Finance Officer, pending the making of a substantive appointment to the post of Assistant Director, Financial Services.

Members were introduced to John Unsworth who had joined the Council as Interim Assistant Director Financial Services.

RESOLVED

that the Director of Customer and Shared Services be authorised to make an interim appointment to the post of Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the members of the Appointments Sub-Committee.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated