

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 24 June 2010.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Mrs S A Goodchild	Cllrs	Ms J Nunn
	R A Baker		Ms A M W Graham		P Rawcliffe
	Mrs A Barker		T Green		A A J Rogers
	A R Bastable		Mrs C Hegley		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		J Street
	N B Costin		Mrs J G Lawrence		G Summerfield
	I Dalgarno		Mrs A M Lewis		A M Turner
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		H J Lockey		Mrs C Turner
	P A Duckett		S F Male		Mrs P E Turner MBE
	Dr R Egan		K C Matthews		P F Vickers
	Mrs J Freeman		Ms C Maudlin		B Wells
	P Freeman		J Murray		P Williams
	D J Gale		Mrs M Mustoe		J N Young
	Mrs R B Gammons		T Nicols		
	M Gibson		A Northwood		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	A Fahn	Cllrs	D J Hopkin	Cllrs	D McVicar
	Mrs D B Gurney		J G Jamieson		R C Stay

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

Prayers

Prayers were taken by Reverend Richard Andrews of Priory Church, Dunstable.

C/10/17

Minutes

Two amendments to the minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 22 April 2010 were proposed:-

- Minute no C/10/10 'Recommendation from the Regulation Committee' referred to Alcohol Designation Order to restrict anti-social drinking in public places in Arlesey and Stotfold, should read Arlesey and "Shefford"; and
- Appendix A - Councillor Wells to be included in the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 22 April 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the above amendments.

C/10/18

Members' Interests

(a) Personal Interests:-

None.

(b) Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-

None.

C/10/19

Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman congratulated Sir Samuel Whitbread on his appointment as Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. He had written to Sir Samuel Whitbread to convey the Council's congratulations to him and to Lady Whitbread.

The Chairman announced that his consort for his term of office would be Councillor Miss Sparrow.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration and Skills Team for the Training, Employment and Enterprise Project Providers exhibition and presentation before the meeting. The Chairman also congratulated Harlington Upper School for achieving third place in the final of the competition for the East of England Young Enterprise of the Year.

The Chairman had attended 15 events since taking office. In particular the Chairman highlighted the excellent performance at the Wider Opportunities Concert at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable which featured lower and middle school children who had been given an opportunity to learn how to play instruments.

The Chairman pointed out that this was Armed Forces Week and collection boxes were located in the Reception areas at Priory House, Shefford and the Council Offices, Dunstable.

The Chairman hoped to be able to host a festival of music at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable on 27 March 2011 when young people and local music groups would be involved. He hoped that Members would support this event. The Chairman advised that for his nominated charities he was still looking at ways of being able to support smaller, local groups within Central Bedfordshire.

The Chairman advised Members that the Forest of Marston Vale had made it through to the final ten of a nationwide search for Britain's best environmental projects. Voting would take place between 26 July to 13 August 2010 to decide the last three projects. The nation would then vote for a winner who would then receive a cash prize to spend on the project.

The Chairman requested that Members complete the agenda and minutes subscription form to help improve efficiency through e-links to agendas on the Council's website.

C/10/20

Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader referred to the importance of the public inquiry for the proposed A5-M1 Link Road. She had written to the Secretary of State for Transport to make clear that the Council would be prepared to enter into an agreement to underwrite the cost of reinstating the public inquiry into the scheme.

The Leader had attended the Town and Parish Council Forum and the Staff Roadshows. The Leader recorded her thanks to the Head of Democratic Services, Kathrin John, who would be leaving the Council on 20 July 2010 to work for the Royal National Institute of Blind People. The Leader made a presentation on behalf of the Council and thanked her for her service and guidance. Members wished Mrs John a successful future. The Chairman allowed Mrs John to respond.

C/10/21

Questions, Statements and Deputations

A question from Mr Havergill, Chairman of Sandy and Beeston Allotment and Leisure Gardens Association had been received under Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution, suggesting that a contribution from Section 106 Agreements be utilised for allotments in Central Bedfordshire. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development indicated that he would discuss the matter with Planning Officers.

C/10/22 **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 two petitions.

The first petition was handed to the Chairman by Councillor Green with a request for a pedestrian crossing in Meadway, Dunstable.

The second petition was handed to the Chairman by Councillor A Turner with a request for traffic calming measures in The Ridgeway, Flitwick.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Green and Councillor A Turner and advised Members that the petitions would be referred to the next Traffic Management meeting and the lead petitioners would be advised of the outcome.

C/10/23 **Recommendations from the Executive**

Executive – 24 June 2010

(a) Climate Change Strategy

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 24 June 2010 which sought approval of the Climate Change Strategy. The Carbon Management Plan was being audited by the Carbon Trust and would be presented to a future meeting of the Executive for approval.

Members were advised that the Council would develop plans to monitor the Climate Change Strategy.

RESOLVED

that the Climate Change Strategy, attached at Appendix A to the Executive report, be adopted.

(b) Central Bedfordshire Council's Draft Single Equality and Diversity Scheme

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 24 June 2010 which sought approval of the Draft Single Equality and Diversity Scheme for Central Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED

that the Draft Single Equality and Diversity Scheme for Central Bedfordshire, as set out at Appendices B and C to the Executive report, be adopted.

Executive – 8 June 2010

(c) Sustainable Community Strategy

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 8 June 2010 which sought approval of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2031.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development advised Members that with the change in Government, whilst the full implications for the growth agenda were not known at this stage, the eight priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy remained important.

RESOLVED

that the Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2031, as set out at Appendix A to the Executive report, be adopted.

(d) Community Engagement Strategy

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 8 June which sought approval of the Community Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2013 and its proposed delivery plan as amended by the Executive.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Community Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2013 and its proposed delivery plan, as amended by the Executive and attached at Appendices A and B to the Executive report, be adopted; and**
- 2. that the Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement work with directorates and partners to implement the Strategy.**

C/10/24

Recommendation from the General Purposes Committee

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

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 3 June 2010 which sought approval of the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council'. Since the publication of the agenda, a response had been received from Leighton Linlade Town Council about the number of members per ward in Leighton Linlade. The Town Council had not suggested an alternative arrangement.

The Chairman of the Council's Electoral Arrangements Review Working Group highlighted the recommendations from the Boundary Commission, in particular the recommendation relating to Sandy, which involved a proposed three Member ward to include Blunham. The Working Group had recommended that the Council should not support this recommendation as Blunham lacked any links to Sandy and was closer in this respect to Moggerhanger.

Members thanked the Officers for their help on the Electoral Arrangements Review.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the response from Leighton Linlade Town Council be noted;**
- 2. that the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission's 'Draft Recommendations on the New Electoral Arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council', now submitted, be approved; and**
- 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.**

C/10/25

Recommendations from the Constitution Advisory Group

(a) Consultation Strategy within the Council's Policy Framework

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 1 June 2010 which sought the amendment to the Constitution to remove the words "Consultation Strategy" from Part B2 section 1.1.3.8 of the Constitution, as there was no separate Consultation Strategy.

RESOLVED

that Part B2 section 1.1.3.8 of the Constitution be amended by the removal of the words "Consultation Strategy".

(b) Call-In of Planning Applications by Members to Development Management Committee

The Council considered a revised report and a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 1 June 2010 which sought the amendment to the Constitution to require that planning reason(s) be provided when a ward councillor calls-in a planning application to Development Management Committee. Members were advised that Officers would be able to advise them on the appropriate reasons for call-in. Development Management training was also available to all Members.

RESOLVED

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”.

(c) Adoption of the Council’s Petition Scheme and Consequential Changes to the Constitution

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Advisory Group held on 1 June 2010 which sought the approval of a Petition Scheme and consequential amendment of the Constitution to comply with the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

RESOLVED

- 1. that for the purposes of the Petitions Scheme, the Chief Executive and all the Directors be nominated as the senior officers who would be subject to the requirement to give evidence at a meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to a petition;**
- 2. that the Council’s e-petitions facility be introduced with effect from 1 October 2010, subject to satisfactory testing;**
- 3. that the Petitions Scheme, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved;**
- 4. that the consequential amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendices B and C to the report, be approved.**

C/10/26 Report of the Bedfordshire Police Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire Police Authority held on 21 May 2010 was submitted.

Councillor Hollick, representative of the Police Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report.

C/10/27 Report of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority held on 5 February 2010 was submitted.

Councillor Street, representative of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority, elaborated on some of the issues in the submitted report. A query was raised about the recruitment of retained fire-fighters. Members were advised that due to changed lifestyles and training requirements it was difficult to recruit retained fire-fighters.

C/10/28

Written Questions

Councillor J Murray had submitted two sets of written questions. The first was about the Grove Theatre, Dunstable and the second question was about the Dunstable Office Refurbishment. The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles and the Portfolio Holder for Customers, Systems and Assets tabled written responses, as set out below:-

Grove Theatre

1. On how many days in 2009 were there performances open to the public?

The Leisure Connection contract stipulates the venue should have activity for 244 days per year – In 2009 there were 266 days of activity which is made up of theatre, cinema, education and conferences. Theatre performances totalled 182 days.

2. What was the total number of seats sold in 2009 and what percentage of full capacity (i.e. full houses for 365 days) does that represent?

101,558 seats were sold. Full capacity is 780 seats x 182 shows = 141,960 seats. 101,558 represents 71% capacity. (its not calculated on 365 days because the contract doesn't stipulate the venue has to have activity for 365, its calculated on number of theatre performances i.e. 182 days).

3. What was the cash value of seats sold in 2009?

Average ticket price is £14 x 101,558 tickets equals £1.42m.

4. How much, in cash terms, was Central Bedfordshire Council's contribution to the running of the Grove Theatre?

CBC pays £278k for the contract fee, plus 3% RPI plus £33k for utilities. (For info, in addition, CBC pays £50k to Colliers for a service contract around the Grove for security / cleaning).

Dunstable Office Refurbishment

1. How much was spent on new furniture in the Dunstable office's refurbishment?

Current expenditure is forecast at £151,500 which is on budget for this element of the Dunstable refurbishment.

2. Is it considered satisfactory by those who use it?

Both formal feedback (through post-move surveys) and ad-hoc feedback (through discussions with colleagues in the offices) is that the new furniture is considered satisfactory. Some staff who are having to work from older desks have shared their disappointment at not having new desks.

3. What is to become of the furniture which is being stored in empty units owned by the Council?

Furniture that is currently in store will be assessed for re-use within council offices on grounds of suitability and condition before the end of July. Where it is not suitable or of a sufficient quality and cannot be economically repaired, consideration will be given to the method of disposal. Surplus equipment will be offered to other not for profit organisations that have expressed interest in any furniture that is no longer required by the council.

4. Is it still serviceable and usable?

About half of the furniture in store could be re-used if need be. Whether this happens will depend upon how much of the furniture taken from Melbourne House and Borough Hall is of a better condition or more suited to the office space that has been created. The other half is currently in storage awaiting managed disposal either to an appropriate recycling company or possibly to voluntary/ charitable groups that have lodged requests with the council.

5. What is the Council doing to let these premises and gain income whilst they are full of furniture and where would Council move the furniture to, should someone take on a lease of these premises?

The units being used for storage were only made available on the understanding that if we had a tenant for any of the occupied units they would be vacated in readiness for occupation on completion of the lease and therefore not used in any way as to deny the council from rental income. It is our clear intention to not use these units for this purpose beyond the end of August at the very latest. By using the unit in this way at this time we have not incurred additional revenue costs and also not denied the council rental income, since there have been no potential tenants of the units used for storage. If potential tenants emerge arrangements will be made to re-locate the re-usable furniture to another location, and to accelerate the process of disposing the stock which is beyond use for the council.

C/10/29

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 condition of the road at Thorn Turn, Houghton Regis.

The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised Members that he would provide a written response.

- 2) Councillor Aldis asked a question about the percentage of waste being recycled in Central Bedfordshire.

The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised Members that the percentage of waste recycled during 2009/10 was 50.3%. It was hoped that the Council would be able to recycle 60% of waste in Central Bedfordshire by 2020.

Councillor Aldis asked a supplementary question about the provision of a kerb side collection for glass.

The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles explained that there were a number of bottle banks located around Central Bedfordshire that could be used for recycling glass.

- 3) Councillor Mrs Chapman asked a question about the procedure for seeking an extension of the green belt between Aspley Guise and Milton Keynes.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development advised Members that the green belt was in the Council's own core strategy. He believed that the housing delivery in this area would not be imminent. The Government was introducing the Decentralisation and Localism Bill to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. Once the Bill was enacted it would be appropriate for the Council to follow this up.

- 4) Councillor Murray asked a question about problems with Amey's Road Helpline randomly deleting reference numbers.

The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles was not aware of the problem and would look into it.

- 5) Councillor Murray asked a question about the quality of grammar and punctuation contained in reports.

The Leader responded in the absence of the Deputy Leader that she would feedback this information to the Deputy Leader and agreed that all publications should be accurate.

- 6) Councillor Aldis asked a question about the procedure for grass cutting and the spraying of weed killer.

The Assistant Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles advised that the Highways and Transport Services Guide had been provided to all Members of the Council. The spraying of weed killer took place between May and June and again in September, if necessary.

- 7) Councillor Mrs Chapman asked a question about what plans were there for calling in and refreshing the Core Strategy to better reflect the democratic wishes of the elected representatives of the people of Central Bedfordshire who were never consulted before MK Partnership forced the unwanted houses on Aspley Guise, remembering that these houses were never included in the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) RSS and were not included by the Secretary of State in the South East England Regional assembly (SEERA) RSS figures and were disallowed by the Inspector in the Central Beds North Core Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development advised Members that due to the change in Government, the position on the growth agenda was unclear and the Council would need to know how much growth would be needed for the area. Further information would be known once the South and North of Central Bedfordshire housing needs study had been carried out. The local MPs were seeking further advice from the Government on the manner in which the needs study should be carried out.

- 8) Councillor Mrs Chapman asked a question about keeping the Memorandum of Understanding with Milton Keynes Council after that Council had passed a resolution on 8 June 2010 "to give a commitment to oppose the expansion by stealth of Milton Keynes beyond its existing boundaries".

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development explained that the Memorandum of Understanding was a useful document and would be kept for the time being.

C/10/30

Motions (If Any)

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

C/10/31

Annual Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Council received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10 which presented a summary of the activities undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year 2009/10. Members thanked Councillor Gibson as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for 2009/10 and the Overview and Scrutiny Team for their hard work.

RESOLVED

to note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the municipal year 2009/10.

C/10/32 **Designation of Statutory Officers**

The Council considered a report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People that requested the Council to designate posts to fulfil the statutory officer roles of the Chief Finance/Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED

1. **that the post of Assistant Director, Financial Services be designated as Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer);**
2. (a) **that the post of Assistant Director, Governance be designated as Monitoring Officer following recruitment to the post;**

(b) **that, the principle of appointing an Interim Monitoring Officer from among the existing Deputy Monitoring Officers at the point that the position of Monitoring Officer becomes vacant, be approved;**

(c) **that the Director of Customer and Shared Services, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, accordingly be authorised to designate one of the existing Deputy Monitoring Officers as Interim Monitoring Officer, should this prove necessary;**
3. **that the post of Assistant Director, Strategy and Performance be designated as Scrutiny Officer; and**
4. **that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Constitution Advisory Group, be authorised to make the necessary amendments to paragraph 2 of Part H1 of the Constitution to reflect the new statutory officer designations proposed above.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.40 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated