

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 15 February 2011.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs P E Turner MBE (Chairman)

Cllr R C Stay (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs R J Drinkwater
Mrs C Hegley
M R Jones
Mrs A M Lewis
S F Male

Cllrs K C Matthews
D McVicar
T Nicols
Mrs C Turner
B Wells

Members in Attendance:

Cllrs P N Aldis
Mrs A Barker
P A Blaine
D Bowater
Dr R Egan
Mrs R B Gammons
Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms A M W Graham
T Green
P Hollick
J G Jamieson
D Jones

Cllrs Mrs J G Lawrence
D J Lawrence
J Murray
Mrs M Mustoe
A A J Rogers
A Shadbolt
P Snelling
Miss A Sparrow
J Street
A M Turner
P Williams
J N Young

Officers in Attendance

Mr G Alderson
Mr J Atkinson

Mr R Carr
Mr R Ellis

Mrs E Grant

Mrs S Hobbs
Mrs J Ogley

Mr J Unsworth

Director of Sustainable Communities
Head of Legal and Democratic
Services
Chief Executive
Director of Customer and Shared
Services
Deputy Chief Executive and Director
of Children's Services
Committee Services Officer
Director of Social Care, Health and
Housing
Interim Assistant Director of Finance

E/10/125

Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E/10/126 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

Portfolio Holders

Councillors Jones, Mrs Lewis, Male and Nicols declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 '16-19 Transport Policy' as they were School Governors.

Assistant Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs C Turner declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 '16-19 Transport Policy' as she was a Governor at Central Bedfordshire College.

Non-Executive Members

Councillor D Jones declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 'Petitions' as he was a School Governor at Hawthorn Park School, Houghton Regis.

Councillors Dr Egan, Mrs Goodchild, Green, Hollick, Rogers and Young each declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 'Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget for 2011/12' as they were Trustees of LuDun.

Councillor Blaine declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 '16-19 Transport Policy' as he was a Governor at Barnfield College and a School Governor.

Councillor Dr Egan declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 '16-19 Transport Policy' as she was a Governor at Central Bedfordshire College.

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

None.

E/10/127 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

E/10/128 **Petitions**

In accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Executive received the following petitions:-

1. Speed Restrictions in Eversholt

Ms Gabrys presented a paper petition requesting speed restrictions in Eversholt. The petition contained 183 signatures requesting that the speed limit be reduced to 20mph between Church End and Linden Lodge, that the current 30mph speed limits be extended to all roads off the C100 into Eversholt and that a 40mph speed limit be applied to the C100 as traffic entered Eversholt from the direction of the M1.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles explained that the petition would be referred on for more detailed consideration to a future Traffic Management meeting. It was noted that the lead petitioner would be notified of the date of the meeting and invited to attend.

2. Save Silsoe Disability/Horticultural Centre

The Chairman acknowledged that a paper and e-petition had been received concerning the Silsoe Disability/Horticultural Centre. The lead petitioner was not in attendance to present the petition.

3. Petition on Care Arrangements at St George's Court, Leighton Buzzard

Mrs Luscombe presented a paper petition on behalf of the lead petitioner on the care arrangements at St George's Court, Leighton Buzzard. She also advised Members that she was speaking on behalf of residents at Lavender Court, Ampthill.

Mrs Luscombe contended that the consultation on the care arrangements had not been adequate and that decisions should be delayed until evidence had been provided of the claimed cost savings without current service levels being compromised.

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Health thanked Mrs Luscombe for presenting the petition and advised that this issue would be considered at agenda item 8 'Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget for 2011/12'.

4. Stop the Closures of Biggleswade Recreation Centre

Mr Harries presented an e-petition concerning the possible closure of Biggleswade Recreation Centre, containing 505 signatures. He was concerned that if the Recreation Centre was to close there would be no sports facilities in Biggleswade and this would have an impact on the clubs and the young people that used the facilities.

5. Petition for Continuity of Service at Sandy Leisure Centre

Mr White, the Mayor of Sandy, presented an e-petition advocating the continuity of service at Sandy Leisure Centre, containing 1060 signatures. He explained that meetings had taken place between Central Bedfordshire Council, Sandy Town Council, Sandy Upper School and Stevenage Leisure Limited to establish ways to keep Sandy Leisure Centre open until 31 March 2012. A solution had been found to keep the Centre open for a further year, but there would be a reduction in the services provided including the loss of the running track. This solution would provide a further year to consider the Centres future.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles thanked Mr Harries and Mr White for presenting the two petitions in relation to Biggleswade Recreation Centre and Sandy Leisure Centre. He confirmed that a solution had been found to enable Sandy Leisure Centre to remain open until the 31 March 2012.

The Portfolio Holder explained that issues in relation to the Biggleswade Recreation Centre would be considered at agenda item 8 'Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget for 2011/12'.

6. Pottton Parents' Petition to Save Our Lollipop Man

Councillor Mrs Lewis presented a paper petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, concerning school crossing patrols in Pottton, containing 313 signatures. Councillor Mrs Lewis highlighted the dangers of children crossing the road outside the schools in Pottton.

7. Petition against the Removal of the School Crossing Patrol in Leighton Road, Toddington

Councillor Nicols presented a paper petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, against the removal of the school crossing patrol in Leighton Road, Toddington, containing 390 signatures. Councillor Nicols explained that the crossing was used by children from the lower and middle schools in Toddington.

8. Petition against the Removal of the School Crossing Patrol – Beaudesert Lower School, Leighton Buzzard

The Chairman acknowledged that a paper petition had been received against the removal of the school crossing patrol outside Beaudesert Lower School, Leighton Buzzard. The lead petitioner was not in attendance to present the petition.

9. Petition against the Removal of the School Crossing Patrol – Hawthorn Park School, Houghton Regis

The Chairman acknowledged that a paper petition had been received against the removal of the school crossing patrol outside Hawthorn Park School, Houghton Regis. The lead petitioner was not in attendance to present the petition.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles acknowledged the four petitions relating to the school crossing patrols. He explained that this issue would be considered at agenda item 8 'Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget for 2011/12'.

E/10/129

Public Participation

The following statements were received in accordance with the Public Participation Scheme:

1. Mr Konstantinidis – Statement of Accounts 2009/10

Mr Konstantinidis explained that he was concerned with the accuracy of the Council's financial information and the implications of this for budget setting.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People thanked Mr Konstantinidis for his comments. He explained that the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10 were the first set of accounts that had been produced by Central Bedfordshire Council. The Council had worked closely with the Audit Commission, an independent body, to close down the 2009/10 accounts. The Audit Commission had acknowledged that Central Bedfordshire Council had robust financial procedures and these were being followed to produce the Statement of Accounts for 2010/11.

2. Mr Baker – Bedfordshire Music Service

Mr Baker contended that the future of Bedfordshire's Music Service was unclear and did not appear to be consistent with the findings of the Henley Review. Mr Baker enquired whether, in light of the Henley Review and confirmation of the Government's commitment to fund school music services, the Council would be reconsidering its proposals to withdraw all local funding for a music service and disaggregation of the existing shared music service.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services thanked Mr Baker for his comments and explained that as a result of the Henley Review the Council would indeed receive a grant. This would be the same as last year plus or minus 10%. When considering the fees and charges for 2011/12, the results of the Henley Review had been taken into account. The music service had to be a cost-neutral service and discussions were continuing on how best to achieve this.

E/10/130 **Capital Programme 2011/12**

The Executive considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People proposing the Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15. It was noted that Government spending plans meant that there were fewer resources available for both revenue and capital activities, and the Council needed to respond to this in its own spending plans. The Capital Programme had been reviewed and the report set out proposals that would reduce the Authority's additional borrowing from the £11m envisaged in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to £7.7m in 2011/12.

The Executive debated the report, during which time the Portfolio Holders responded to questions and comments from the Executive and non-Executive Members in attendance. Portfolio Holder undertook to provide written responses to a number of points of clarification sought by individual Members, including covering capital funding for Tithe Farm Lower School, Houghton Regis and Section 106 funding for the provision of a lower school in Leighton Buzzard.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to agree schemes to commence in 2011/12 and reduce the Authority's new borrowing requirement in line with the request by Council in February 2010.

RESOLVED

To note that the level of borrowing associated with the proposed 2011/12 Capital Programme had been reduced to £7.7m to minimise the impact on the Council's future Revenue Budgets.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1. that the 2011/12 to 2014/15 Capital Programme, as attached at Appendix A to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved;***
- 2. that the 2011/12 to 2014/15 Capital Programme – Housing Revenue Account, as attached at Appendix B to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.***

E/10/131 **Draft Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget for 2011/12**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People proposing the Council's spending plans for the medium term and the levels of Council Tax rate for 2011/12.

In accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in paragraph 2 of Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution, the Chairman invited the members of the public who had registered to speak on this item to address the Committee:

- Mr Dillon, Chief Executive of the Disability Resource Centre commented on the proposals concerning LuDun. Mr Dillon explained that the LuDun Trust was not meeting its objectives under the terms of its Deed. The Trustees were investigating all possible options for the future.
- Mr Kenny, representative of the GMB Union, spoke in relation to the proposed closure of LuDun. Mr Kenny requested that the Executive consider using reserves to secure the existing facility for the time being, pending an appropriate business case being developed to enable LuDun to operate as a profitable business.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People introduced the budget proposals. He commented that the Council had a legal requirement to develop a balanced budget. It also had to take account of the current economic climate. He indicated that savings proposals were needed to accommodate in particular reductions in Government grant. The total value of the savings that would be required for next year was approximately £20m.

The Executive welcomed the comments received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, stakeholders and the public including petitions that had been submitted at this and previous Executive and Council meetings. Portfolio Holders commented on the key issues raised throughout the consultation process including:

- the proposed closure of LuDun
- the efficiency savings to be made at Lavender Court and St Georges Court
- Silsoe Horticulture Centre
- the mobile library service
- school crossing patrols
- leisure centres
- the Music Service
- Youth Services.

The Leader explained that a Member Task Force was addressing how best the Council could facilitate the transfer of some activities and services to communities. Encouraging discussions had already taken place with some Town Councils too and the Council was exploring the scope for a pan public sector approach to the delivery of some services in conjunction with its partners in Bedfordshire and Luton.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to agree a balanced budget for 2011/12 and identify resource requirements for the medium term.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1. that the response to consultation with Overview & Scrutiny Committees and the public, set out in paragraphs 17 to 21 of the report submitted to the Executive, be noted;**

2. ***that the Revenue Budget for 2011/12 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12 to 2014/15, as attached to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved;***
3. ***that the following adjustments to the draft budget in response to comments and representations received throughout the scrutiny and consultation process, be noted:***
 - (a) ***adjustments to the proposals covering Overview & Scrutiny offset by further reductions within the Democratic Services budget;***
 - (b) ***no reduction in School Crossing Patrols from 1 April 2011, but that contributions be sought from communities and partners during the course of the year, with a view to securing the patrols beyond 2011/12;***
 - (c) ***the creation of a fund to facilitate the transfer of services to partners and communities and that the costs of Public Conveniences be a first charge on this fund during 2011/12; and***
 - (d) ***a reduction in the proposed increases in car parking charges;***
4. ***that the Council Tax Base, attached at Appendix G to the report submitted to the Executive, be noted;***
5. ***to agree a Band D Council Tax of:***
 - ***£1,308.33 for residents in the north of Central Bedfordshire***
 - ***£1,344.15 for residents in the south of Central Bedfordshire***
6. ***that the fees and charges set out in Appendix K to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved;***
7. ***that the additional objective set out in paragraph 58 to the Treasury Management Strategy, be included;***
8. ***that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan set out in Appendix L to the report submitted to the Executive, with an average increase in rents of 7.02%, be approved.***

ADJOURNMENT

The Executive adjourned from 12.35 pm to 12.42 pm.

E/10/132 **Commissioning the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)**

The Executive considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services on the proposed options for the delivery of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision in Central Bedfordshire focussed on the needs of pupils.

The Portfolio Holder explained her preferred option that tenders should be invited from local schools and colleges with an Ofsted rating of good or above, particularly in behaviour and attendance, to work with vulnerable students and that where the bidder identified a need for it, suitable accommodation should be sought (option 2).

Reason for decision: The Service Level Agreement with Bedford Borough Council for the provision of a PRU, which is led by Bedford Borough Council, was due to end on 31 March 2011. The current provision had been reviewed and options for the future delivery of PRU provision had been explored and option 2 was the recommended option.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the arrangements for the PRU to be disaggregated from Bedford Borough Council on 31 March 2011 as set out in the submitted report at Option 2, be approved;**
- 2. that the PRU provision should include the establishment of a management committee on which both the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services should sit 'ex officio';**
- 3. that the outcome of the tender process as set out in the exempt Appendix D to the submitted report, be approved; and**
- 4. that the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, takes forward detailed work on the future delivery of PRU provision in Central Bedfordshire from 2012 onwards, to take account of the commissioning strategy, any new and relevant legislation and any changes to school funding arrangements.**

E/10/133 **16 - 19 Transport Policy**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services proposing the adoption of the Post 16 Transport Policy for Central Bedfordshire to ensure that the Council met its statutory responsibilities.

In accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in paragraph 2 of Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution, the Chairman invited the member of the public who had registered to speak on this item to address the Executive:

- Janine Dixon-Wilkinson expressed her concern that the policy might disadvantage young people in the south and south west of Central Bedfordshire as a result of the proposed maximum distance for subsidised transport of 15 miles.

The Executive debated the report, during which time the Portfolio Holder responded to questions and comments from the Executive and non-Executive Members in attendance.

RESOLVED

that the Post 16 Transport Policy for Central Bedfordshire be deferred to the Executive meeting on 15 March 2011.

E/10/134

Local Transport Plan 3

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holders for Sustainable Development and also Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles concerning the draft Local Transport Plan for Central Bedfordshire. The Plan would cover the 15 year period to March 2026 and provided a framework for investment in transport locally. The Plan formed an important tool through which the Authority set out its transport related objectives and wider priorities. It also contained a shorter term implementation plan to be updated on an annual basis and included a programme of schemes to be delivered on the ground over a three year period. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development emphasised the extensive consultation process that had been undertaken during the creation of the Plan.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions and comments from the Executive and non Executive Members in attendance. These included comments in relation to freight, the status of the A1 and access for disabled people. The Portfolio Holder explained that Local Area Transport Plans would be produced and rolled out to cover the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- 1. that the Local Transport Plan 3 for Central Bedfordshire be approved;**
- 2. that the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development, be authorised to make any necessary minor drafting changes to the document prior to final publication.**

E/10/135 **Mineral Safeguarding Consultation Document**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development that set out the Mineral Safeguarding Areas consultation document for public consultation. The report noted the intended timetable for the progress of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework.

Reason for decision: To enable progress on the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework to be maintained.

RESOLVED

1. **that the Mineral Safeguarding Areas Consultation Document for the purpose of public consultation, be approved;**
2. **that the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development, be authorised to make any minor changes to the document; and**
3. **that the intended stages for the future progress of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy be noted.**

E/10/136 **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 February 2011 – 31 January 2012 was received.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 1.25 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated