

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 8 January 2013.

### PRESENT

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)  
Cllr M R Jones (Vice-Chairman)

Executive Members:	Cllrs	C Hegley B J Spurr R C Stay	Cllrs	M A G Versallion J N Young
Deputy Executive Members:	Cllrs	A D Brown Mrs S Clark I Dalgarno A L Dodwell	Cllrs	D J Hopkin A M Turner B Wells R D Wenham
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	Mrs P E Turner MBE		Executive Member for Economic Partnerships
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis Mrs A Barker A R Bastable R D Berry M C Blair D Bowater Mrs C F Chapman MBE Mrs G Clarke C C Gomm	Cllrs	Mrs S A Goodchild Ms A M W Graham D Jones K C Matthews D McVicar J Murray T Nicols B Saunders P Williams
Officers in Attendance		Mr G Alderson Mr J Atkinson  Mr P Burt Mr R Carr Ms D Clarke  Mr P Dudley  Mrs S Hobbs Mr N Murley  Mr C Warboys		Director of Sustainable Communities Head of Legal and Democratic Services Head of Property Assets Chief Executive Assistant Chief Executive (People & Organisation) Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Committee Services Officer Assistant Director Business & Performance Chief Finance Officer

E/12/96 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

E/12/97 **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

E/12/98 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had explained that Agenda item 16 'Leisure Facilities Capital Programme' would be withdrawn and submitted to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2013.

The Chairman made reference to the draft Budget 2013/14 and was pleased that the proposal was not to increase Council Tax and that there were no cuts to service outcomes that would effect the residents.

E/12/99 **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

E/12/100 **Public Participation**

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

**1. Sally Gray**

Ms Gray spoke on behalf of the Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Action Group about the Council's Leisure Strategy and the Procurement of a contract including for the management of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre. In particular, Ms Gray referred to the swimming pool at Houghton Regis Leisure Centre and urged the Council to reopen it and include the pool as a requirement in the procurement process.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services thanked Ms Gray for her statement and confirmed that this issue would be discussed under Agenda item 15 'Leisure Facilities Strategy Adoption'. He explained that he would be moving an amendment to the recommendation to enable a detailed investigation into the financial viability of reopening Houghton Regis Leisure Centre swimming pool in parallel with the procurement exercise for a management contract.

**2. Clare Evans, Town Clerk to Houghton Regis Town Council**

Ms Evans spoke on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council in support of the Council's Leisure Strategy and advocated the reopening of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Swimming Pool.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services thanked Ms Evans for her statement and explained that this issue would be discussed at Agenda item 15 'Leisure Facilities Strategy Adoption'.

**3. Brian Collier**

Mr Collier spoke to Agenda item 11 'Council Tax Support Scheme' and suggested that the proposed allocation of grant to town and parish councils to help offset their reduced tax bases contained some inequities in the treatment of different areas.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources thanked Mr Collier for his statement and explained that the Government had made the decision to replace the current national Council Tax Benefit scheme from 1 April 2013. Consultation on this element of the Council's proposals would close on 17 January 2013 and Mr Collier's comments would be considered in conjunction with other responses received during the consultation.

**4. Mr Allen**

Mr Allen spoke in connection to the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2012 as he believed they did not fully reflect the statement he had made at this meeting and that he had not received a response from the Leader or the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services.

The Leader explained that it was for the Executive to determine the accuracy of the minutes. The Leader confirmed that Officers had written to Mr Allen regarding various issues, but a full answer to Mr Allen's statement at the December meeting would be provided.

E/12/101

**Forward Plan and Key Decisions**

**RESOLVED**

**that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014 be noted.**

E/12/102 **Draft Budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 to 2017**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that proposed the draft budget for 2013/14 and updated the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that had previously been approved by Council in February 2012. The MTFP had been extended to 2016/17 and an initial draft budget for 2013/14 prepared reflecting further changes in funding and cost pressures and efficiencies, including building on those realised in 2012/13.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that since the publication of the agenda, the Government had announced the Local Government Finance Settlement on 19 December 2012. The effect of this Settlement was to create a further pressure for the Council to address next year of £1.8m. This would be addressed in the Executive's final budget proposal on 5 February 2013 before proposals were submitted to Council on 21 February 2013.

Reason for decision: To enable consultation on the draft budget 2013/14 and MTFP 2013-2017 prior to recommendations by the Executive to Council in February 2013.

**RESOLVED**

**that the draft budget proposals for 2013/14 be approved as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties.**

E/12/103 **Draft Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that proposed the draft Capital Programme (excluding the Housing Revenue Account) for the four years from 1 April 2013.

Reason for decision: To progress the development of a Capital Programme for the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 – 2017.

**RESOLVED**

**that the draft 2013/14 to 2016/17 Capital Programme be approved for consultation with Overview and Scrutiny and other stakeholders.**

E/12/104 **Draft Budget Report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan.**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing that set out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) during the first year of the Self Financing regime and presented the proposed 30 year Landlord Service Business Plan.

The report also considered the budget setting process for 2013/14 and the assumptions that had been made in arriving at the projections in the Plan, to create the financial framework for the Landlord Service to operate within.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing welcomed the comment about the informative articles contained in the Housing Matters publication and would confirm its distribution.

Reason for decision: To facilitate effective financial management and planning for the HRA under self financing.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the draft budget proposals for 2013/14 as set out below be approved for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties and that the Executive:**

- (a) notes the Housing Revenue Account's debt portfolio and interest payments due in 2012/13;**
- (b) approves the proposal for no principal debt repayments in the current financial year or during the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), namely 2012/13-2016/17;**
- (c) approves the creation of a new reserve, to be called the Strategic Reserve;**
- (d) approves funding of the HRA's 2012/13 Capital Programme from the negative HRA Capital Financing Requirement, thereby releasing additional funds for the Sheltered Housing Re-Provision Reserve (SHRR) and Strategic Reserve (SR);**
- (e) approves the HRA Draft Revenue Budget for 2013/14 and the Landlord Service Business Plan summary at Appendix A;**
- (f) approves the 2013/14 to 2016/17 HRA Capital Programme at Appendix B;**
- (g) approves the average rent increase of 4.67% for 2013/14 in line with the national rental increase as per the Government's Rent Convergence Policy; and**
- (h) approves the proposed allocation of £0.2m to support financial advice, money management and debt problems for customers.**

E/12/105

## **Council Tax Support Scheme**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that provided an overview of the outcomes from the public consultation and set out the proposed local Council Tax Support Scheme that, if agreed, would come into effect from 1 April 2013.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources confirmed that the Council Tax Base had not changed since he wrote to town and parish councils in December 2012, but that it was proposed that town and parish councils would receive a grant from the Council to assist them with the reduction in their tax base. It was proposed that the funding be distributed on a proportionate basis, dependent upon the forecast level of Council Tax Support discounts to be awarded in each parish.

On the Council Tax Support scheme generally, the intention was to provide training for Members on its operations.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to endorse the Central Bedfordshire Council local Council Tax Support Scheme. If the Scheme was not approved by 31 January 2013, the Council would have to award local Council Tax Support in accordance with the Government's default scheme which would result in the cost of the scheme exceeding the Government grant to the Authority for local Council Tax Support.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the findings and outcomes from the Council Tax Support scheme consultation carried out with residents and stakeholders as set out in Sections 33 to 46 of the report and the Consultation report be noted; and**
- 2. that the estimated financial implications arising from the recommended scheme for the Council's local Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1 April 2013 be noted.**

#### ***RECOMMENDED to Council***

- 1. that the local Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in the Executive report be approved;***
- 2. that the Council Tax Discretionary Discounts policy attached as Appendix D to the Executive report be approved; and***
- 3. that the payment of a Council Tax Support Grant to each parish as proposed in sections 67 to 71 of the Executive report be approved.***

E/12/106

#### **Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that summarised the proposed changes to the Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy. The revised Strategy recognised a greater focus on risk in the Treasury Management Code of Practice and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Reason for decision: To ensure that an effective and appropriate treasury management framework be in place for the Council.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- 1. that the Treasury Management policy statement January 2013 to January 2016 as set out in the Executive report be approved;**
- 2. that the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16, the Investment Strategy 2013/14, detailed counterparty criteria 2013/14 and the capital, treasury and borrowing Prudential Indicators contained within Appendix B to the Executive report be approved; and**
- 3. that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement contained within Appendix B (section 11) to the Executive report which sets out the Council's policy on MRP be approved.**

E/12/107

**School Funding Reforms - Schools Block**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Children's Services that set out the proposed distribution for the Dedicated Schools Grant – School Block. The proposals had previously been subject to full consultation with all maintained schools and academies and more recently to consultation with and the agreement of the Schools Forum.

The Executive Member for Children's Services confirmed that small schools would be supported by the Council. He did not anticipate that any small schools would close due to the school funding reforms but it was likely that some schools would need to consider more cost-efficient organisational structures such as collaboration or federation.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to submit the final submission to the Education Funding Agency by the 18 January 2013.

**RESOLVED**

**that the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant – Schools Block for 2013-14 be approved.**

E/12/108

**CCTV Plan 2013-2017**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services that proposed the adoption of a CCTV Plan 2013 – 2017 for Central Bedfordshire that would set out how the CCTV Service would operate and develop.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services responded to questions about the funding of CCTV, the requirements for rural areas and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to develop the CCTV Service to add value, provide CCTV where it was needed most and look to ways to provide sustainability in the most cost effective way.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the CCTV Plan for Central Bedfordshire be adopted; and**
- 2. that the Director of Sustainable Communities be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services, to implement the actions set out in the CCTV plan.**

### **E/12/109 Leisure Facilities Strategy Adoption**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services that set out the proposed Leisure Facilities Strategy. The Strategy would be made up of four chapters to provide a framework for the prioritisation, provision and development of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in Central Bedfordshire.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services referred to a small number of minor amendments to the proposed Strategy and moved the following amendment to the recommendations ii) and iv), which was duly seconded:-

- “ii) invites the Committee to review more detailed financial information regarding the leisure capital programme when it considers the overall capital programme proposals at it’s meeting on 17 January 2013;
- iv) requests detailed investigations and the development of a business plan to reopen Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Swimming Pool, and in parallel reviews the reopening of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre swimming pool once the outcome of the new Leisure Management Contract tendering process is complete where the revenue impact of doing so will be a priced option.”

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to deliver a number of the Council’s key priorities.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the Council’s Leisure Facilities Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, as amended, be adopted; and**
- 2. that in response to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive**
  - (i) welcomes the Committee’s comments as to the comprehensive nature of the review;**

- (ii) invites the Committee to review the more detailed financial information regarding the leisure capital programme when it considers the overall capital programme proposals at its meeting on 17 January 2013;
- (iii) notes that development of the Leisure Strategy was progressing in accordance with the agreed timetable; and
- (iv) requests detailed investigations and the development of a business plan to reopen Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Swimming Pool, and in parallel reviews the reopening of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre swimming pool once the outcome of the new Leisure Management Contract tendering process was complete where the revenue impact of doing so would be a priced option.

E/12/110 **Leisure Facilities Capital Programme**

This item was withdrawn to enable the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the report on 17 January 2013.

E/12/111 **Procurement of Leisure Management Contract**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services that set out the details of the proposed procurement of a new leisure management contract for Flitwick Leisure Centre, Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Sandy Sports and Community Centre with the ability to include Houghton Regis Leisure Centre within which there would be a priced option to reopen the swimming pool.

It was noted that the proposed contract would be flexible and include break clauses subject to performance and not necessarily for seven years as stated in the report.

Reason for decision: To ensure the continuation of leisure centre provision, test economies of scale in bringing four leisure centres within one contract and market test the reopening Houghton Regis Leisure Centre swimming pool.

**RESOLVED**

**that the procurement of a leisure management contract for Flitwick Leisure Centre, Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Sandy Sports and Community Centre, with the ability to include Houghton Regis Leisure Centre within which there would be a priced option to reopen the swimming pool, be approved in accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement Governance.**

E/12/112 **City Deal**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development that the Council expresses an interest in participating in a Milton Keynes based City Deal, supporting the wider South East Midlands economic area.

In response to questions, the Leader and the Executive Member explained the potential benefits of a City Deal and gave assurances about the commitment to safeguarding Central Bedfordshire against any potential risks.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to participate and influence the shape of the potential City Deal in securing additional tools and flexibilities to drive local economic growth.

**RESOLVED**

**to delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Sustainable Communities –Strategic Planning and Economic Development the negotiation and development of a Milton Keynes based City Deal on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.**

E/12/113 **Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013 - 2014**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services that set out the proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan for endorsement by the Executive and adoption by Council on 24 January.

Reason for decision: Central Bedfordshire Council is a responsible authority of the Community Safety Partnership under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act places a statutory duty on the local authority to work with other responsible authorities to develop and implement a strategy for reducing crime and disorder. The strategy must cover a district, borough or unitary area.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Strategic Assessment and the Community Safety Partnership Priorities be endorsed.**

***RECOMMENDED to Council***

***that the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014 be adopted.***

E/12/114 **Award of the Housing Kitchen & Bathroom Refurbishment Contracts 2013-2016**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing that proposed the award of contracts for the Housing Kitchen and Bathroom Refurbishment Service 2013-2016. The Contract would provide improved value for money and deliver good quality customer care for the Council's residents.

Reason for decision: To enable the housing kitchen and bathroom refurbishment programme to be maintained and delivered in 2013-2016.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Contract for Housing Kitchen and Bathroom refurbishment contract be awarded to three contractors; C, E and F.**

E/12/115 **Technical Call Off Contract**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that sought approval to appoint by way of tender an organisation that can provide all the Council's requirements for technical consultancy under the terms of a publicly procured tender process.

In a response to a question, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources confirmed that opportunities would be taken to share procurement with other organisations for services that were not unique to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Reason for decision: To provide a framework for the early delivery of technical consultancy services for all Council projects requiring the service.

**RESOLVED**

**that the procurement of the Technical Call Off Framework Contract in accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement Governance be approved.**

E/12/116 **Award of Kitchen and Bathroom Refurbishment Contract 2013 to 2016 to Council Housing Properties**

See minute E/12/115 for details.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.40 a.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....