

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 19 June 2014.

PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)
Cllr A R Bastable (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater
C C Gomm
Ms A M W Graham
K C Matthews

Cllrs B Saunders
A Shadbolt
P Williams

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs P N Aldis R D Berry A D Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration
	A L Dodwell	Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services and Community Services
	Mrs D B Gurney J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
	B Wells	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
	J N Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

Officers in Attendance:	Mr M Coiffait	– Community Services Director
	Mr J Cushing	– Economic Policy Manager
	Mr J Longhurst	– Director of Regeneration and Business
	Mr J Partridge	– Corporate Policy Manager

Others in Attendance	Mr D Mouawad	Chief Executive, SEMLEP
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SC/14/19. **Members' Interests**

None.

SC/14/20. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

SC/14/21. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 08 May 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to amending the references to parking on grass verges (Minutes SC/14.8 refers) to read “(...) regards to funding for restricting parking on grass verges.”

SC/14/22. **Petitions**

Cllr Aldis presented a petition regarding safety issues on Sunderland Road and the hazardous movement of traffic that made sections of the road unsafe for pedestrians. It was suggested that a raised table or zebra crossing be constructed to improve road safety.

In response Cllr Young agreed to ask officers to review the Local Transport Plan for Sandy to see if it had been included and to determine the level of funding that might be available from the Council. It was suggested that the Town Council consider how much it might be able to contribute to a scheme to resolve this issue.

Cllr Gurney commented that road safety might be impacted by proposals to close two rail crossings in the area, which would also have an impact on local traffic movement. It was also commented by a Member that business in the area had also previously indicated a concern regards this road.

RECOMMENDED that the petition be considered by the next Traffic Management Meeting and the minutes of the Sustainable Communities OSC be made available when this issue was considered further.

SC/14/23. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

SC/14/24. **Call-In**

None.

SC/14/25. **Requested Items**

None.

SC/14/26. **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member(s) provided an update to the Committee on several matters that were not included on the agenda and responded to questions as follows:-

- Progress in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan, which would be submitted to the Secretary of State and planning applications for the expansion of sites at Dunton Lane and Potton, which would be taken

through the planning process. In response to a specific question Cllr Young agreed to provide a briefing by email on a gypsy and traveller site at Long Lake Meadow.

- The Development Strategy, which was out to consultation the responses to which would be sent directly to the secretary of state. In response to a request Cllr Young agreed to provide further information in relation to the amount of consultation that had been undertaken with Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to the Development Strategy.
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) had been signed with the majority of neighbouring authorities under the duty to cooperate. Cllr Young confirmed that there would be no delay to the Development Strategy as a result of the two authorities not signing the MoU.
- A report that would be presented to a future Committee meeting to update on adult skills activity.
- Work was underway to renew various waste contracts.
- The condition of the road network in Central Bedfordshire had been recognised by the Department for Transport as the second best in the country.
- Several investments in leisure facilities including Houghton Regis and Flitwick leisure centres.
- The refurbishment of libraries, which was coming to completion.
- Money had been made available to continue to fix category one and two potholes at the same time where they were within 10 metre. Funds had also been made available to address concerns in relation to pavements and Members were invited to advise the Council of any specific concerns.
- Money would be made available to refresh white lines on the highway where there were safety concerns.
- Further information would be provided to Members in relation to the funding to prevent parking on grass verges and if possible discussed at the Town and Parish Council conference.

SC/14/27. **South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership**

Mr D Mouawad delivered a presentation that set out the context for the South East Midland Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). It was stressed that in economic terms Central Bedfordshire was part of a wider geography that encompassed several areas and in totality encompassed 1.8m people and 67,000 businesses. The aim of SEMLEP was to articulate a collective approach to growth and to ensure that the ambition for growth was balanced and sustainable for the future.

SEMLEP were focused on developing logistics and advanced manufacturing sectors as a means of supporting economic growth. This included the development of enterprise zones (such as Northampton Waterside) to stimulate economic growth and support the accrual of business rates that could be used to support further development in the region. SEMLEP was focused on delivering greater connectivity, enterprise and skills although quality of life was also a significant driver for the region. In response to feedback from businesses SEMLEP had delivered the Velocity Growth Hub to provide business support and would continue to attract investment and help businesses

to reach the market. SEMLEP also had an important role in relation to strategies for social inclusion

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) set out plan and priorities for major capital investment projects for which SEMLEP could bid to Central Government and Europe although funding was limited. Priority schemes for the area were the Woodside Link and dualling the A421.

In response to the presentation the Committee discussed several issues for which responses were provided by officers as follows:-

- The geography of the south east midlands region was predominantly determined by the travel to work area. Localism had become a focus for the partnership more recently, which was aware of the need to fully articulate this approach to localism.
- SEMLEP was a channel for funding for major infrastructure projects. The partnership would support the process to collectively define and argue the case for investment but money for infrastructure projects would not be kept by the partnership. Whilst there were no guarantees that the region would receive funding there was no other mechanism to apply for funding for major capital projects.
- Clearly defined assessment criteria were applied to schemes to determine their benefits and priority in relation to other schemes for which LEPs would compete for funding. Ministers would meet privately to discuss which schemes would be granted funding.
- The time-bank scheme operating in Central Bedfordshire had not been duplicated by the introduction of the velocity growth hub. The Hub would advise on sources of support that was available, including national programmes from which businesses could benefit and local schemes such as time-bank.
- Any benefit accrued from the business rates relating to the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone would come into the SEMLEP area as a whole.
- A minimum of 20% of European funding was required to be used for social inclusion. Other European funding streams could be used on small and medium sized enterprises and innovation
- A particular governance mechanism for the partnership had been set out by Central Government and this demonstrated that the Government would control funding, contracts and the procurement of delivery. Scrutiny of the partnership was provided by the businesses that were involved in the SEMLEP Board.

The Committee thanked Mr D Mouawad for attending the meeting and agreed that an annual report should be delivered to the Committee to report on the progress of delivering schemes.

RECOMMENDED that an annual report be received by SEMLEP to provide an update on the delivery of schemes.

SC/14/28. **Provisional Work Programme and Executive Forward Plan**

AGREED that the reports on the Community Infrastructure Levy and the revised Planning Obligations Strategy be rescheduled and that the meeting on 24 July 2014 be cancelled with the quarterly performance reports being circulated to Members outside the meeting.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.50 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated