

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 28 November 2013.

PRESENT

Cllr Ms C Maudlin (Chairman)
Cllr D Bowater (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Ms A M W Graham	Cllrs	A Shadbolt
	Mrs A Barker		Mrs D B Gurney		I Shingler
	A R Bastable		C Hegley		M A Smith
	R D Berry		P Hollick		Miss A Sparrow
	M C Blair		J G Jamieson		R C Stay
	A D Brown		K Janes		A M Turner
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		R W Johnstone		Mrs P E Turner MBE
	Mrs S Clark		D Jones		M A G Versallion
	N B Costin		M R Jones		N Warren
	I Dalgarno		D J Lawrence		B Wells
	A L Dodwell		Mrs J G Lawrence		R D Wenham
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		D McVicar		P Williams
	P A Duckett		Mrs M Mustoe		J N Young
	Dr R Egan		R B Pepworth		A Zerny
	C C Gomm		B Saunders		
	Mrs S A Goodchild		J A G Saunders		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	L Birt	Cllrs	K C Matthews	Cllrs	T Woodward
	Mrs G Clarke		T Nicols		
	D J Hopkin		B J Spurr		

Officers:	Mr M Coiffait	–	Community Services Director
	Miss H Bell	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Ms D Clarke	–	Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Mrs J Ogle	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mrs M Clay	–	Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer
	Ms M Peaston	–	Committee Services Manager
	Mr C Warboys	–	Chief Finance Officer

C/13/44

Prayers

Prayers were taken by Pastor Jumbo Isong.

C/13/45 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2013 be confirmed and signed as a true and correct record.

C/13/46 **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

C/13/47 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received.

C/13/48 **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

C/13/49 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised that she intended to vary the order of business and to take Item 15, Monitoring Treasury Management Six Months to 30 September 2013, after item 9.

The Chairman also advised that item 14 Open Questions would be taken as the last item of business.

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The Chairman's Civic reception had been combined with her 'You Make a Difference Awards' held on 23 October 2013 and had been a success.
- The Chairman's next Civic Reception would be held on 9 March 2014.
- The Chairman would be hosting an event at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable on 27 April 2014 called 'Wow! Here come the Girls'.

The Chairman also invited Members to attend a tree planting event in Biggleswade at the weekend.

C/13/50 **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader reported upon:

- the Looked After Children Awards;

- the opening of new classrooms and hall at Greenfield Lower School;
- the opening of the alternative free school for students for whom mainstream schooling did not meet their needs; and
- economic development in Central Bedfordshire.

C/13/51

Executive Member Presentations

Councillor M Jones, Executive Member for Corporate Resources reported on work within his portfolio area including:

- The Customer Service Team had dealt with 1 million customer calls in the last year. Over 1,000 Freedom of Information Requests, 500 complaints, 150 compliments and 500 MP enquiries had been received and dealt with.
- £50 million of savings had been made in the last year with no rise in Council tax.
- The Communications Team had responded to over 600 media enquiries in the last year.
- In the last year, the Procurement Team had let 200 contracts, Overview and Scrutiny had supported over 60 meetings and briefings and Human Resources had responded to 70,000 job applications.
- A Working Group had been set up to evaluate and address the impact of Welfare Reform.

Councillor Jones responded to questions.

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing, focused her presentation on the work of Village Care Schemes throughout Central Bedfordshire. Councillor Hegley drew on case studies to demonstrate the impact of Village Care Schemes on people's lives.

Councillor Hegley responded to questions.

C/13/52

Recommendations from the Executive

(a) Central Bedfordshire Draft Equality and Diversity Strategy 2013-16

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 5 November 2013 concerning the draft Equality and Diversity Strategy 2013-16. The Strategy had been refreshed in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to enable the Council to

continue to adopt a robust approach to equality issues across all of its activities.

RESOLVED

that the Draft Equality and Diversity Strategy for Central Bedfordshire be adopted.

(b) Implementation of the Leisure Facilities Strategy, including findings of the Flitwick Leisure Centre Invest to Save Feasibility Study

Cllr Jamieson declared a personal interest upon this item as he is a member of Flitwick Leisure Centre.

The Council considered recommendations from the meeting of Executive held on 5 November 2013 concerning the implementation of the Leisure Facilities Strategy, including the findings of the Flitwick Leisure Centre invest to save feasibility study.

RESOLVED

- a) that a total gross expenditure budget of £11,925,000 be included in the capital programme in 2014/15 and 2015/16;**
- b) that the capital receipts arising from the disposal of surplus land adjoining the redevelopment Flitwick Leisure Centre be applied to reduce the Council's prudential borrowing;**
- c) that a virement in 2013/14 of £436,900 to the Flitwick Leisure Centre redevelopment invest-to-save scheme from an identified underspend in the 2013/14 £830,000 Leisure Strategy Implementation Invest to Save Project, be approved;**
- d) that the development of the Flitwick Football facility approved by Executive on 18 March 2013 should continue and the award of contract for the construction of a pavilion be made in accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement Governance;**
- e) that the grant of a lease at a peppercorn rent for the management and operation of the Flitwick football facility (including pitches and pavilion) for 25 years to Flitwick Eagles Football Club be approved, subject to their provision of an appropriate business case;**
- f) that a land exchange between Central Bedfordshire Council and Flitwick Town Council to facilitate the redevelopment of Flitwick Leisure Centre be approved; and**
- g) that the redevelopment of Flitwick Leisure Centre be approved and the procurement of a building contractor be undertaken in**

accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement Governance.

(c) Roker Park Stotfold

The Council considered recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 27 November 2013 concerning the proposed release of a covenant restricting use of Roker Park, Stotfold, to enable Stotfold Town Council to sell the land and invest the proceeds in a new football ground/stadium at Arlesey Road.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Restrictive Use Covenant in favour of Central Bedfordshire Council on land known as Roker Park, Stotfold be released to enable Stotfold Town Council to dispose of the land for residential development on condition that:**
 - (a) the net proceeds of sale (enhanced value) be shared equally between Central Bedfordshire Council and Stotfold Town Council;**
 - (b) Stotfold Town Council will repay the outstanding loan of £537,000 owed to Central Bedfordshire Council from its share of the proceeds of sale; and**
 - (c) Stotfold Town Council would give an undertaking to use the balance of its share of the proceeds of sale to construct a new football ground/stadium off Arlesey Road, Stotfold.**
- 2. that Central Bedfordshire Council will make a contribution from its share of the proceeds of sale (up to a maximum of £500,000) to assist the Town Council to complete the construction of the new football ground/stadium on land off Arlesey Road, Stotfold; and**
- 3. that subject to resolutions 1 and 2 above, Central Bedfordshire Council will grant Stotfold Town Council a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rent of 24 acres of land off Arlesey Road, Stotfold to relocate the new football ground/stadium will be located.**

C/13/53

Monitoring Treasury Management Six Months to 30 September 2013

The Council received and considered a report of the Deputy Leader, Executive Member for Corporate Resources on the implementation of the Council's Treasury Strategy approved for six month period up to 30 September 2013. The report set out how the strategy was implemented, the state of the financial markets and what action had been undertaken to address the challenges and results of that action.

RESOLVED

that the satisfactory performance of the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for the six month period ended 30 September 2013 be noted.

C/13/54 Report of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

The Committee received and considered a report of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority following its meeting held on 22 October 2013.

RESOLVED

that the report of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.

C/13/55 Report of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel

The Council received and considered a report of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel.

RESOLVED

that the report of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel be noted.

C/13/56 Notice of Motion

Notice had been received from Councillor Aldis of a Motion under Procedure Rule No 17 as follows:

“The Council recognises that even in these difficult financial times it has a duty of care and responsibility towards the Town and Parish Councils which are the bedrock of our democracy. Accordingly it asks the Executive, when preparing the Council’s draft revenue budget for 2014-15, to include a grant to Town and Parish Councils equivalent to 80% of the Transition and Mitigation Grant for the financial year 2013-14.

Unless directed otherwise by Central Government, the Council proposes that in future years the level of this grant will be reduced by 20% each year (60% of 2013-2014 level in 2015-2016; 40% in 2016-2017; 20% in 2017-2018).

The Council recognises that these arrangements will considerably assist local councils in those areas where the change in the Council Tax system is most acute.”

Further to agreement by the Council in accordance with Part B5 paragraph 19.8 of the Council’s Constitution, an alteration to the motion from Councillor Zerny was accepted, as follows:

1. 2nd sentence of first paragraph: replace the wording following “2014-15” with:-

“to pay the same level of Council Tax Support Grant to each of the parish councils as in 2013/14 and to do so throughout the duration of the Medium Term Plan. If any reductions have to be made to the support grant they should be directly proportional to any decrease in the overall income Central Bedfordshire receives from Government.”

2. Remove 2nd paragraph
3. Final sentence reverse the order of the words “considerably assist”.

So the motion before Council read:

“The Council recognises that even in these difficult financial times it has a duty of care and responsibility towards the Town and Parish Councils which are the bedrock of our democracy. Accordingly, it asks the Executive, when preparing the Council’s draft revenue budget for 2014/15, to pay the same level of Council Tax Support Grant to each of the parish councils as in 2013/14 and to do so throughout the duration of the Medium Term Financial Plan. If any reductions have to be made to the support grant they should be directly proportional to any decrease in the overall income Central Bedfordshire Council receives from Government.

The Council recognises that these arrangements will assist considerably local councils in those areas where the change in the Council Tax system is most acute.”

In accordance with paragraph 21.5 of Part B5 of the Council’s Constitution ‘Full Procedure Rules’, a recorded vote was requested and granted.

Upon being put to the vote, those in favour of the motion were:

Councillors: Aldis, Coleman, Egan, Goodchild, Graham, D Jones, Murray, Pepworth, Shingler, Smith, Williams and Zerny.

Those against the motion were:

Councillors: Barker, Bastable, Berry, Blair, Bowater, Brown, Chapman, S Clark, Costin, Dalgarno, Dodwell, Duckett, Gomm, Hegley, Hollick, Jamieson, Janes, Johnstone, M Jones, D Lawrence, J Lawrence, McVicar, Mustoe, B Saunders, J Saunders, Sheppard, Sparrow, Stay, A Turner, P Turner, Versallion, Warren, Wells, Wenham & Young.

Councillors: Mrs Drinkwater, Mrs Gurney & Shadbolt had left the meeting prior to consideration of this item.

Councillor Maudlin abstained from voting.

The motion was lost.

C/13/57 Written Questions

Written questions had been submitted under Rule No. 13.2 by Councillor Aldis as follows:

What is the annual cost to this Authority of Concessionary Bus Passes over and above the grant paid by the Government?

What percentage of residents in Central Bedfordshire hold a bus pass?

How many journeys are made in the average year and which way is the trend?

In the last year how many new Concessionary Bus Passes have been issued by this Authority?

Of the total number how many were:

- a. New applicants
- b. Replacements for lost or stolen cards. Replacements for damaged cards?

In what circumstances is the £10 charge for the replacement cards not enforced?

The Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities responded to the question and indicated that he would circulate a written reply to all Members of the Council.

C/13/58 Open Questions

The Chairman invited the Minority Group Leaders to ask a question each prior to the consideration of questions that had been placed in the Open Questions receptacle.

1. Councillor Murray asked about the future for schools in Dunstable.

The Executive Member for Children's Services referred to the significant increase in positive results at Key Stage 4.

2. Councillor Aldis asked a question about the improvements to the A1 in Bedfordshire and how Ward Members would be kept informed.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities-Strategic Planning and Economic Development summarised the measures being undertaken to promote improvements to the A1 and the ways in which Members would be involved.

3. Councillor Egan sought assurance that the matter of abandoned land within her ward was being dealt with.

Councillor Young advised that the matter had now been referred to the Assets Team for resolution.

4. Councillor Egan asked how many Central Bedfordshire employees were working on the basis of zero hours contracts.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that the Council did not employ staff on this basis.

5. Councillor Chapman asked about the implications of a call in of the Executive's decision concerning its ICT network.

The Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that delays brought about by the call in had resulted in additional costs to the Council.

6. Councillor Pepworth asked about the steps the Council was taking to support residents affected by Welfare Reforms.

The Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing explained how Housing Officers and the Citizens Advice Bureau were working to help residents affected by the reform.

7. Councillor Egan asked about Social Housing available to disabled residents.

The Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing advised that available accommodation was reviewed on a monthly basis.

8. Councillor Murray referred to the delays in responding to a written question he had asked at Council on 12 September 2013.

The Deputy Leader, Executive Member for Corporate Resources would undertake to discuss delays in responding to written communications with the relevant Director.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.55 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated