

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Helen Bell
direct line 0300 300 4040
date 4 June 2014

NOTICE OF MEETING

COUNCIL

Date & Time

Thursday, 12 June 2014 6.30 p.m.

Venue at

Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the COUNCIL

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING

AGENDA

Prayers

Father Frank, The Chairman's Chaplain will take prayers.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence to be received.

2. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 1 May 2014.

(Attached pages 5 to 21)

3. Members' Interests

To receive from Members any declarations of interest.

4. Questions, Statements and Deputations

To receive any questions, statements and deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of part A4 of the Constitution. (This session will be held at the Chairman's discretion and will normally last no longer than 15 minutes.)

5. Petitions

To receive and discuss petitions if any, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of part A4 of the Constitution.

6. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman to announce any matters of communication.

7. Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader of the Council to announce any matters of communication.

8. Executive Member Presentations

To receive reports from up to three Executive Members on recent matters of interest and ask questions on matters contained within the reports.

Reports are anticipated from Councillors Mrs Turner and Versallion.

9. **Recommendations from the Executive**

To consider recommendations from the meeting of the Executive, 27 May 2014 and answer questions asked under Rule No. 14.1.

(a) Development Strategy – Revised Pre-submission Version

(b) Superfast Broadband Extension Programme

(Attached pages 23 to 26)

10. **Recommendations from the General Purposes Committee**

To consider recommendations from the General Purposes Committee held on 29 May 2014

(i) Revised Calendar of Meetings – Eight Week Cycle

(Attached pages 27 to 30)

11. **Report of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service**

To receive and consider the reports of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and answer questions asked under Rule No. 13.1

(Attached pages 31 to 33)

12. **Motions (if any)**

To consider motions by Members of the Council under Rule No. 17 in the order received.

13. **Written Questions**

To answer written questions from Members of the Council if any under Rule No. 13.2.

14. **Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

To receive the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

(Attached pages 35 to 62)

15. **Audit Committee Activity Report - Annual Report**

To receive a report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee on the Committee's activities.

(Attached pages 63 to 67)

16. **Open Questions**

To answer Open Questions asked by Members of the Council under Rule No. 13.7

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 1 May 2014.

PRESENT

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

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

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	A D Brown	Cllrs	Dr R Egan	Cllrs	N J Sheppard
	N B Costin		K Janes		T Woodward

Officers:	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Ms D Clarke	–	Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Mrs M Clay	–	Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer
	Mr M Coiffait	–	Community Services Director
	Mr D Galvin	–	Head of Financial Performance
	Mrs E Grant	–	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Mrs S Hobbs	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mr J Longhurst	–	Director of Regeneration and Business Support
	Mrs J Ogley	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Ms M Peaston	–	Committee Services Manager

PRAYERS

Prayers were taken by Councillor Duckett and Father Frank, the Chairman's Chaplain.

C/14/1. Election of Chairman 2014/15

Due to her expected nomination for the position for 2014/15, the Chairman relinquished the Chair and the Vice-Chairman presided for this item.

The Vice-Chairman invited nominations for the office of Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2014/15. Councillor Caroline Maudlin was duly proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

that Councillor Maudlin be elected to the office of Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2014/15.

Councillor Maudlin then read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Maudlin thanked Members for re-electing her for a second term in office. She summarised her experience in office during 2013/14. She placed on record her thanks to the Vice-Chairman, the Chairman's Personal Assistant and her Chaplain for their support during 2013/14.

The Chairman's chosen charity for 2013/14 had been Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Cllr Maudlin announced that she had raised over £25,000 for this charity with the support of her friends and family, Councillors and employees.

C/14/2. Election of Vice-Chairman 2014/15

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2014/15. Councillor David Bowater was duly proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

that Councillor Bowater be elected to the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council for the municipal year 2014/15.

Councillor Bowater then read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

C/14/3. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

C/14/4. **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

C/14/5. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman made no announcements or communications.

C/14/6. **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader made no announcements or communications.

C/14/7. **Recommendations from the Executive**

(a) Community Safety Partnership Plan 2014-2015

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 18 March 2014 seeking approval of the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2014-2015.

RESOLVED

that the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2014-2015, as set out in the Executive Agenda, be adopted.

(b) The Future Management of Central Bedfordshire Council's Residential Care Homes for Older People

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 22 April 2014 that proposed the transfer of the management of the seven residential care homes for older people, owned by the Council, to the Council, given the notice received from Bupa to bring to an end the existing contract.

RESOLVED

- 1. to approve the transfer of the staff in the homes affected to the employment of Central Bedfordshire Council on 1 August 2014 in accordance with TUPE regulations;**

2. to approve the virement from the budget allocated to the Bupa Residential Homes Contract for the period August 2014 to March 2015 of £3,789,000 to a new budget heading of 'Directly Managed Residential Homes for Older People' under the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care; the subjective amounts in the budget were set out in paragraph 45 of the Executive report; and
3. that it increases the budget estimate for income from Fees for Residential Care Homes by £302,000 for the period August 2014 to March 2015.

C/14/8.

Appointment of Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to Committees and other Council Bodies 2014/15

The Council considered a report from the Leader of the Council outlining the requirements for Member appointments to committees and other Council bodies, including taking account of political proportionality. It was noted that the overall balance for the Independent Liberal Democrat was 1.18 and not 11.18 as set out in the report.

Council was advised that the Fostering Panel and Fostering Permanence Panel had merged into one panel, the Fostering and Permanence Panel. The nomination for the single position on that Panel was Councillor Amanda Dodwell.

RESOLVED

1. that the Council confirms for the municipal year 2014/15:
 - (a) the structure, size and terms of reference of the committees, sub-committees and joint committees set out in sections D1, E2 and J2 of the Council's constitution; and
 - (b) the allocation of seats and substitutes to these and other bodies, as listed in Appendix A to the report, in accordance with the political balance rules where they apply.
2. that the appointment of individual Members and substitutes to committees and other bodies be approved in accordance with the nominations submitted by the political groups, subject to Councillor Dodwell taking up the position on the Fostering and Permanence Panel, as set out in Appendix B to the report and attached as Appendix A to these minutes;
3. that the appointment of the Members to the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, including at least one member of the Council nominated by the Leader, be approved, as set out in Appendix C to the report and attached at Appendix B to these minutes;

4. that the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the various committees for the municipal year 2014/15 be approved in accordance with nominations as set out in Appendix D to the report and set out at Appendix C to these minutes;
5. to note that the following persons had been appointed to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee as co-opted members with voting rights on education matters for the period June 2011 to the AGM in May 2015:
 - (a) Mrs Frances Image, Roman Catholic Diocesan representative
 - (b) Mr Jon Reynolds, Church of England Diocesan representative
 - (c) Mr Stephen Court, School Parent Governor representative
 - (d) Mr Jonathan Chapman, School Parent Governor representative
 - (e) Mr Timothy Hodey, School Parent Governor representative.

C/14/9.

Composition of the Executive and Scheme of Delegation of Executive Functions

The Council received a report from the Leader of the Council setting out the composition of the Executive for 2014/15, including the names of the Councillors appointed to the Executive. The report also confirmed that no amendments were proposed to the Scheme of Delegation of Executive functions beyond those previously approved by the Leader of the Council.

The Leader advised the Council that Councillor Amanda Dodwell would take up the role as Deputy Executive Member for Community Safety as well as continuing her existing role as Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the composition of the Executive and allocation of portfolios, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (b) that the scheme of delegation of Executive functions, as set out at Part C3 of the Constitution, be noted; and
- (c) that Councillor Mark Versallion would continue to be the Lead Member for Children's Services.

C/14/10. **Appointments to the Police and Crime Panel and the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service 2014**

The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer on appointments to the Police and Crime Panel and the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Leader advised the Council that Councillor Amanda Dodwell would replace Councillor Brian Spurr on the Police and Crime Panel. An expression of thanks was made to Councillor Spurr for his work on the Panel since its inception.

RESOLVED

1. **to note that appointments were made for the first time to the Police and Crime Panel at the annual meeting of Council on 14 June 2012;**
2. **that the membership of the Police and Crime Panel for 2014/15 be noted as follows:-**
 - **Councillor Mrs Chapman, MBE**
 - **Councillor Dodwell**
 - **Councillor Ms Graham**
 - **Councillor Hollick**
3. **that the appointments to the Police and Crime Panel would be made next at the Council's Annual Meeting in 2015, and every four years thereafter;**
4. **that it be noted that at the Council's meeting on 19 May 2011 five Members had been appointed to serve on the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for a period of four years until May 2015 as set out below:**
 - **Councillor Mrs Drinkwater**
 - **Councillor McVicar**
 - **Councillor J Saunders**
 - **Councillor Shadbolt**
 - **Councillor Williams.**

C/14/11. **Leader of the Council's Annual Report**

The Leader presented his annual report celebrating successes over recent years and outlining plans for the future.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 7.21 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated

Appendix A

NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2014/15

PROPORTIONAL BODIES	
A1. 'Ordinary' Committees	Councillors
<p>Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee (9 members + 6 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Fiona Chapman MBE (C) Cllr Bev Coleman (I) Cllr Paul Duckett (C) Cllr Dr Rita Egan (iLD) Cllr Roy Johnstone (C) Cllr Marion Mustoe (C) Cllr Ann Sparrow (C) Cllr Nigel Warren (C) Cllr Tim Woodward (C) Subs: Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr Julian Murray (I) Cllr Brian Saunders (C) Cllr John Saunders (C) Cllr Andrew Turner (C)</p>
<p>Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (10 members + 5 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Gill Clarke (C) Cllr Norman Costin (C) Cllr Paul Duckett (C) Cllr Rita Drinkwater (C) Cllr Peter Hollick (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr David McVicar (C) Cllr Roger Pepworth (La) Subs: Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr Susan Goodchild (LD) Cllr Ken Janes (C) Cllr Brian Saunders (C) Cllr Naomi Sheppard (C)</p>

<p>Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (9 members + 6 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr Gill Clarke (C) Cllr Rita Drinkwater (C) Cllr Paul Duckett (C) Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr Susan Goodchild (LD) Cllr Doreen Gurney (C) Cllr Naomi Sheppard (C) Cllr Mark Smith (I) Subs: Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Fiona Chapman MBE (C) Cllr Alison Graham (I) Cllr David Hopkin (C) Cllr David McVicar (C) Cllr Ann Sparrow (C)</p>
<p>Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee (9 members + 6 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Alan Bastable (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Alison Graham (I) Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr David McVicar (C) Cllr Ken Matthews (C) Cllr Brian Saunders (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Peter Williams (LD) Subs: Cllr Fiona Chapman MBE (C) Cllr Kevin Collins (C) Cllr Peter Hollick (C) Cllr Roy Johnstone (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr Mark Smith (I)</p>
<p>Audit (7 members + 4 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr Mike Blair (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Kevin Collins (C) Cllr Norman Costin (C) Cllr David Lawrence (C) Cllr Adam Zerny (I) Subs: Cllr Jane Lawrence (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Mark Smith (I) Cllr Naomi Sheppard (C)</p>

<p>Development Management Committee (13 members + 7 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr Mike Blair (C) Cllr Tony Brown (C) Cllr Fiona Chapman MBE (C) Cllr Sue Clark (C) Cllr Kevin Collins (C) Cllr Ken Matthews (C) Cllr Caroline Maudlin (C) Cllr Tom Nicols (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Ian Shingler (I) Cllr Nigel Young (C) Subs: Cllr Lewis Birt (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Bev Coleman (I) Cllr Ian Dalgarno (C) Cllr Roy Johnstone (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr Brian Spurr (C)</p>
<p>General Purposes (12 members + 7 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Amanda Dodwell (C) Cllr Peter Hollick (C) Cllr James Jamieson (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr Maurice Jones (C) Cllr David Lawrence (C) Cllr Jane Lawrence (C) Cllr Julian Murray (I) Cllr Ken Matthews (C) Cllr Roger Pepworth (La) Cllr Richard Stay (C) Cllr Mark Versallion (C) Subs: Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Norman Costin (C) Cllr David Hopkin (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Ian Shingler (I) Cllr Nigel Young (C)</p>

<p>Licensing (12 members + 7 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Bev Coleman (I) Cllr Ian Dalgarno (C) Cllr Amanda Dodwell (C) Cllr Ken Janes (C) Cllr Julian Murray (I) Cllr Marion Mustoe (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Nigel Warren (C) Subs: Cllr Kevin Collins (C) Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr Susan Goodchild (LD) Cllr Jane Lawrence (C) Cllr Caroline Maudlin (C) Cllr Ian Shingler (I) Cllr Nigel Young (C)</p>
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A2. Joint Committee	Councillors
Wixams Joint Development Control (9 members + 6) substitutes)	Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr Alan Bastable (C) Cllr Mike Blair (C) Cllr Paul Duckett (C) Cllr James Jamieson (C) Cllr Ken Matthews (C) Cllr Mark Smith (I) Cllr Andrew Turner (C) Subs: Cllr Lewis Birt (C) Cllr Tony Brown (C) Cllr Sue Clark (C) Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Vacancy (I)
A3. Other Council Bodies	Councillors
Appeals Panel (9 members + 6 substitutes)	Cllr Lewis Birt (C) Cllr Fiona Chapman MBE (C) Cllr Ian Dalgarno (C) Cllr Rita Drinkwater (C) Cllr Dr Rita Egan (iLD) Cllr Peter Hollick (C) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr Ken Matthews (C) Cllr Julian Murray (I) Subs: Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Paul Duckett (C) Cllr Ian Shingler (I) Cllr Richard Wenham (C) Cllr Nigel Young (C)
Corporate Parenting Panel (8 members + 5 substitutes)	Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Norman Costin (C) Cllr Amanda Dodwell (C) Cllr Susan Goodchild (LD) Cllr Naomi Sheppard (C) Cllr Mark Versallion (C) Cllr Budge Wells (C) Subs: Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Doreen Gurney (C) Cllr Ken Janes (C) Cllr Brian Saunders (C) Cllr Andrew Turner (C)

<p>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) (5 members + 3 substitutes)</p>	<p>Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr Rita Drinkwater (C) Cllr Charles Gomm (C) Cllr Doreen Gurney (C) Cllr Roger Pepworth (La) Subs: Cllr Mark Versallion (C) Cllr Nigel Warren (C)</p>
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<p>B. NON-PROPORTIONAL BODIES</p>	
<p>B1. Other Committees and Sub-Committees</p>	<p>Councillors</p>
<p>Licensing Sub-Committee (3 members drawn from the pool of the Licensing Committee)</p>	<p>Cllr Nigel Aldis (LD) Cllr Angela Barker (C) Cllr Ray Berry (C) Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr Bev Coleman (I) Cllr Ian Dalgarno (C) Cllr Amanda Dodwell (C) Cllr Ken Janes (C) Cllr Julian Murray (I) Cllr Marion Mustoe (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Nigel Warren (C)</p>
<p>B2. Joint Committees</p>	<p>Councillors</p>
<p>Dunstable Joint Committee (5 members)</p>	<p>Cllr Carole Hegley (C) Cllr Peter Hollick (C) Cllr David McVicar (C) Cllr Ann Sparrow (C) Cllr Nigel Young (C)</p>
<p>Houghton Regis Partnership Committee (4 members)</p>	<p>Cllr Dr Rita Egan (iLD) Cllr Susan Goodchild (LD) Cllr David Jones (LD) Cllr Peter Williams (LD)</p>
<p>Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee (5 members)</p>	<p>Cllr David Bowater (C) Cllr David Hopkin (C) Cllr Alan Shadbolt (C) Cllr Brian Spurr (C) Cllr Nigel Warren (C)</p>

<p>Biggleswade Joint Committee (4 members + 2 subs)</p>	<p>Cllr Maurice Jones (C) Cllr David Lawrence (C) Cllr Jane Lawrence (C) Cllr Tim Woodward (C) Subs: Cllr James Jamieson (C) Cllr Tricia Turner, MBE (C)</p>
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<p>B3. Other Panels and Informal Bodies</p>	<p>Councillors</p>
<p>Joint Adoption Panel (1 member)</p>	<p>Cllr Angela Barker (C)</p>
<p>Fostering and Permanence Panel (1 member)</p>	<p>Cllr Amanda Dodwell (C)</p>

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Appendix B

Health and Wellbeing Board Nominations and Membership

(This body is not required to be politically proportionate.)

At its meeting on 21 March 2013 the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board offered its advice as to the membership of the Board after 1 April 2013, as follows:

- The Chairman of the Board would be a Councillor.
- The Vice-Chairman of the Board would be a representative from the health sector.
- There should be three representatives from the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- There should be one representative from the NHS Commissioning Board Area for Hertfordshire & South Midlands.
- In addition to the Directors provided for statutorily, the Board should include the Chief Executive and Community Services Director.

This advice was followed in 2013 and the membership in 2014/15 of the Health and Wellbeing Board is accordingly proposed as follows:

<p>Nominations (must be at least one) by the Leader of the Council for appointment to the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act, s194.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Mrs P Turner MBE, Executive Member for Economic Partnerships • Cllr Mrs C Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing • Cllr M Versallion, Executive Member for Children’s Service
<p>Members of the Board who are officers of Central Bedfordshire Council, statutorily required by reason of their office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Adult Social Services, Central Bedfordshire Council (Julie Ogley) • Director of Children’s Services, Central Bedfordshire Council (Edwina Grant until a successor to the role is appointed) • Director of Public Health, Central Bedfordshire Council (Muriel Scott)

<p>Representative from Healthwatch, statutorily required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Featherstone, Chairman of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
<p>Representatives from the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, statutorily required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Rooke, Chief Operating Officer • Dr Paul Hassan, Chief Clinical Officer • Dr Judy Baxter, Clinical Director
<p>Such other persons, or representatives of such other persons, as the Council thinks appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Carr, Chief Executive, Central Bedfordshire Council • Chris Ford, Finance Director, Hertfordshire & South Midlands Area Team, NHS England • Marcel Coiffait, Community Services Director, Central Bedfordshire Council (non-voting observer)

Appendix C

**NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMANSHIP / VICE-CHAIRMANSHIP OF
STANDING COMMITTEES 2014/15**

Committee	Chairman	Vice-Chairman
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny	Cllr Paul Duckett	Cllr Miss Ann Sparrow
Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny	Cllr Mrs Angela Barker	Cllr Norman Costin
Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny	Cllr Mrs Rita Drinkwater	Cllr Mrs Doreen Gurney
Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny	Cllr David McVicar	Cllr Alan Bastable
Audit	Cllr Mike Blair	Cllr David Bowater
Development Management	Cllr Ken Matthews	Cllr Alan Shadbolt
General Purposes	Cllr Peter Hollick	Cllr Richard Stay
Licensing	Cllr Ray Berry	Cllr Ken Janes
Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board	Cllr Mrs Tricia Turner, MBE	To be appointed by the Board at its first meeting

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COUNCIL MEETING – 12 JUNE 2014

**Recommendation to Council from the Executive meeting
held on 27 May 2014**

E/14/11. Development Strategy - Revised Pre-Submission Version

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that included a revised draft Pre-Submission version of the Development Strategy. The Development Strategy was an overarching planning policy document that set out the overall approach to new development in Central Bedfordshire for the period up to 2031, including new homes, jobs and infrastructure and detailed policies to guide decisions on planning applications. The Development Strategy had been revised following the comments received from the public consultation and a changed policy context.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Regeneration confirmed that the Council was working closely with neighbouring authorities to help meet Luton's unmet housing need in line with the Duty to Co-operate.

Pending the adoption of the Development Strategy, the existing policies covering the north of Central Bedfordshire would continue to be used for development management purposes but the Executive Member agreed to seek clarification on points raised about the Marston Vale area and the Airfield at Cranfield.

Reason for decision: To enable progress on the draft revised Development Strategy prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State in October 2014 and during the Examination period.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- 1. that the draft revised Pre-Submission Development Strategy attached at Appendix A to the Executive report be approved for the purposes of Publication and Submission to the Secretary of State; and***
- 2. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any minor amendments to the Development Strategy:***
 - (i) prior to Publication;***
 - (ii) after Publication but before Submission; and***
 - (iii) during the Examination process.***

RESOLVED

that the draft revised Pre-submission Development Strategy, be endorsed for Development Management guidance purposes for use in the south of Central Bedfordshire prior to its formal adoption*.

**In the north of Central Bedfordshire the existing adopted documents will continue to be used.*

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COUNCIL MEETING – 12 JUNE 2014

**Recommendation to Council from the Executive meeting
held on 27 May 2014**

E/14/17. Superfast Broadband Extension Programme

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that proposed that the Council fully participated in the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Superfast Extension Programme. This would enable the delivery of the necessary infrastructure to provide superfast broadband (speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second) to at least 95% of premises and at least 2 Megabits per second to all premises in Central Bedfordshire. It was recommended that an additional £500,000 capital funding was required to fully match BDUK funding.

Reason for decision: To secure external resources and put in place the necessary infrastructure at the earliest opportunity to accelerate the delivery of superfast broadband, in line with achieving the Council's medium term objectives and Joint Local Broadband Plan.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That an additional £500,000 capital funding to fully match Broadband Delivery UK allocations for the delivery of superfast broadband infrastructure be approved.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the use of the BDUK procurement framework to select a private partner to put in place necessary infrastructure to deliver at least 95% superfast coverage (speeds of at least 24 megabits per second) and ensure access to infrastructure able to provide at least 2 Megabits per second to all premises be approved;**
- 2. that the local procurement priority, to maximise total coverage, and subject to this, seek to achieve a balance of residential and business premise coverage and to seek to achieve a reasonable geographic spread, taking into account local demand, demonstrated through responses to the Broadband survey be approved;**
- 3. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to select the contractor based on any priorities the Council sets and the successful completion of the BDUK procurement process and sign and vary the contract if additional resources are secured during the lifetime of the contract;**

4. **to authorise the Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to represent the Council through the Superfast Extension Programme; and**
5. **that the Council's continued participation with the existing partnership arrangements, updating the collaboration agreement as required be approved. Furthermore, that the Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Business, approves any proposed changes to the membership and terms of reference to the partnership.**

Recommendation to Council on 12 June 2014	From: General Purposes Committee on 29 May 2014	Item 10
	Revised Calendar of Meetings – Eight Week Cycle	
1.	Council is asked to approve the following recommendation:-	
	that the proposed revisions to the 2014-15 Calendar of Meetings, as set out at Appendix A, be approved and adopted.	
	Background	
2.	The General Purposes Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer which set out the proposed revisions to the Council's adopted Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2014-15.	
3.	The Committee noted that the revisions would introduce an eight week cycle for the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees with the aim of reducing the overall number of meetings without giving rise to a negative impact on effectiveness or efficiency. Discussions on the proposed eight week cycle had been held with senior officers and Members and by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel and support for the proposal had been given.	
4.	If adopted, the proposed revisions would be introduced from September 2014. This would allow the full range of changes arising from an eight week cycle to take effect from the beginning of the September/October cycle of meetings. Members were advised that, as a result of adopting the new cycle, it would also be necessary to reschedule meetings of the Audit and the General Purposes Committees (22 September from the morning to the afternoon, . and 12 March to 5 March respectively). In addition a second meeting of the General Purposes Committee would need to be rescheduled (from 4 December to 20 November) to enable the Chairman to attend in view of his commitments in the December period. A draft revised Calendar of Meetings showing the proposed new meeting dates (marked in red) and those dates previously agreed by Council in January 2014 (marked in blue) is attached at Appendix A.	
5.	During discussion on the impact of the proposed revisions, reference was made to the presumption that all members of the Development Management Committee, together with nominated substitutes, would attend that Committee's site visits. Concern was expressed that, despite recent amendment to the site visit schedule, clashes remained in the revised Calendar between the site visit dates and those dates proposed for some Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. A request was made that officers ensure that such clashes did not arise	

	when drafting the Calendar of Meetings for 2015-16. Further discussion then took place on the possible impact of the revised meeting cycle on the management of the Council's business.	
6.	In response to the concerns raised the Chairman assured Members that their comments had been noted and would be fully considered.	
Appendices	Appendix A	Central Bedfordshire Council Calendar of Meetings 2014-15 (Part) Proposed Eight Week Cycle

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014 – 2015 (PART)**

PROPOSED EIGHT WEEK CYCLE

Thur	11 Sep	Council	6.30pm	Mon	2 Feb	CPP	10.30am
Tues	16 Sep	CS OSC (was 02/09)	10.00am	Thur	5 Feb	HWB	1.00pm
Thur	18 Sep	SC OSC (was 04/09)	10.00am	Tues	10 Feb	Executive (budget)	9.30am
Mon	22 Sep	SCHH OSC		Wed	11 Feb	DMC	10.00am
		(was 08/09)	10.00am	Thur	26 Feb	Council (budget)	6.30pm
Mon	22 Sep	Audit (was 10.00am)	14.30pm	Mon	2 Mar	Council (R)	
Tues	23 Sep	CR OSC (was 09/09)	10.00am			(Police precept)	5.00pm
Wed	24 Sep	DMC	10.00am	Wed	4 Mar	Licensing	10.00am
Thur	2 Oct	General Purposes	10.00am	Thur	5 Mar	Gen Purp (was 12/03)	10.00am
Thur	2 Oct	HWB	1.00pm	Tues	10 Mar	CS OSC (was 17/02)	10.00am
Mon	13 Oct	CPP	10.30am	Wed	11 Mar	DMC	10.00am
Tues	14 Oct	Executive (was 23/09)	9.30am	Thur	12 Mar	SC OSC (was 19/02)	10.00am
Tues	21 Oct	CR OSC	10.00am	Mon	16 Mar	SCHH OSC (was 02/03)	10.00am
Wed	22 Oct	DMC	10.00am	Tues	17 Mar	CR OSC (was 03/03)	10.00am
				Mon	23 Mar	CPP	10.30am
(Tues	4 Nov	Executive deleted – not		Mon	30 Mar	Audit	10.00am
required under 8 week cycle)				Tues	31 Mar	Executive (was 17/03)	9.30am
Tues	11 Nov	CS OSC (was 14/10)	10.00am	(Tues	31 Mar	CS OCS deleted – not required	
Wed	12 Nov	Licensing	10.00am	under 8 week cycle)			
Thur	13 Nov	SC OSC (was 16/10)	10.00am	(Thur	2 Apr	SC OSC deleted – not required	
Mon	17 Nov	SCHH OSC		under 8 week cycle)			
		(was 20/10)	10.00am	Thur	2 Apr	HWB	1.00pm
Wed	19 Nov	DMC	10.00am	Wed	8 Apr	DMC	10.00am
Thur	20 Nov	Gen Purp (was 04/12)	10.00am	Thur	9 Apr	Council	6.30pm
Thur	27 Nov	Council	6.30pm	(Mon	13 Apr	SCHH OSC deleted – not required	
Mon	1 Dec	CPP	10.30am	under 8 week cycle)			
Thur	4 Dec	HWB	1.00pm	(Tues	14 Apr	CR OSC deleted – not required	
Tues	9 Dec	Executive	9.30am	under 8 week cycle)			
Thur	11 Dec	SC OSC	10.00am	(Tues	21 Apr	Executive deleted – not	
Fri	12 Dec	CS OSC	10.00am	required under 8 week cycle)			
Mon	15 Dec	SCHH OSC	10.00am	Thur	7 May	ELECTIONS	
Tues	16 Dec	CR OSC	10.00am	Thur	14 May	Induction Event	
Wed	17 Dec	DMC	10.00am	Thur	21 May	Council	
Mon	12 Jan	Audit	10.00am			(Annual Meeting)	6.30pm
Tues	13 Jan	Executive		Wed	27 May	DMC	10.00am
		(draft budget)	9.30am				
Wed	14 Jan	DMC	10.00am				
Thur	15 Jan	General Purposes	10.00am	GP – per cycle if needed			
Tues	20 Jan	CS OSC	10.00am	DMC – 4 weekly			
Thur	22 Jan	SC OSC	10.00am	Licensing – quarterly			
Mon	26 Jan	SCHH OSC	10.00am	Audit - quarterly			
Tues	27 Jan	CR OSC	10.00am	HWB – quarterly or as needed			
Thur	29 Jan	Council	6.30pm				

Key:

CPP – Corporate Parenting Panel
CR OSC – Corporate Resources OSC
CS OSC – Children’s Services OSC
DMC - Development Management Committee
HWB – Health & Wellbeing Board
SCHH OSC – Social Care, Health & Housing OSC
SC OSC – Sustainable Communities OSC

(R) - Reserve

Venues:

Licensing Sub-Committees will be arranged at local venues as and when required. All other meetings will normally be at Priory House unless otherwise agreed by the committee or body concerned.

DRAFT



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY FROM ITS MEETING ON 2 MAY 2014 TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) held a meeting on 2 May 2014 at Dunstable Community Fire Station. The major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

1. COMMUNICATIONS

FBU Grievance

Members of the Executive were appointed to hear a collective grievance from the FBU. It was agreed that there must be three Members of the Executive present for the hearing to be quorate.

Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework and Peer Challenge

A peer challenge session would be held on 8 July 2014, with the Authority being represented by Councillors Drinkwater, McVicar and Saleem.

Industrial Action

Members were advised that strike action would take place on Friday, 2 May from 12:00-17:00, Saturday, 3 May from 14:00- 02:00, and Sunday, 4 May from 10:00-15:00. A ban on voluntary overtime would be in place from 15:00 on Sunday 4 May to 12:00 Friday 9 May.

Transformation Fund

The Chairman of the Authority was delegated to sign off bids, with the Authority's Treasurer, to the Government's Transformation Fund.

2. CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP 8 APRIL 2014

Members adopted the refreshed Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Annual Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Practices.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP 9 APRIL 2014

Members were advised that the new breathing apparatus and associated communications equipment had been rolled out throughout the Service and that the Policy and Challenge Group would receive a demonstration of the new equipment on the morning of its next meeting.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP 10 APRIL 2014

The Chair reported that actions were being taken forward as a result of the internal audits on VAT Healthcheck and Key Financial Controls and the health and safety audit on New and Expectant Mothers.

5. AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE 15 APRIL 2014

Arising from a suggestion to restrict paper copies of agendas and reports to those Members specifically requesting them, the Authority's 2013-14 Review of Effectiveness, Members agreed to trial a 'paperless' meeting at the September meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group.

It was noted that the restriction of paper copies would need to be evaluated prior to its implementation and that appropriate software should be made available to Members if they would only be receiving e-copies of agendas and reports.

Hard copies of papers would continue to be provided to the public and press attending meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority at this stage.

6. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) 2014-2018

The outcomes of the consultation process on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2014-18 were submitted. The two proposals that had been included in the consultation, on Senior Officer Rotas and the review of the Retained Duty System, had both received majority support.

The Community Risk Management Plan 2014-18 was approved for publication.

7. FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS DISCRETIONS

Members approved the following discretions arising from reforms to the Firefighters Pension Schemes of 1992 and 2006:

- the discretion to increase the commutation limit be adopted, with individual proposals to be examined on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the Service and agreed by the Chief Fire Officer, on advice from the Director of HR and the Head of Finance.
- abatement will apply in cases of re-employment of members of the 1992 and 2006 schemes, unless a completed non-worsening clause has been submitted.
- temporary promotion and continued professional development payments are treated as additional pension benefit (APB) with a review following

introduction of the 2015 scheme and the comparative information from the LGPS 2014 scheme.

8. INFORMATION BULLETIN

An information bulletin detailing incidents of note and letters of appreciation for the period 1 January – 31 March 2014 was received.

Following discussion of the incidents, Members requested that an exception report be presented to the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group when Officers used their discretion to deviate from operational policy in exceptional circumstances to affect safe rescue of members of the public.

**COUNCILLOR McVICAR
CHAIRMAN OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

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Meeting: Central Bedfordshire Council
Date: 12 June 2014
Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (2013/14)
Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel
Summary: This report presents a summary of the activities undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny in the municipal year 2012/13

Contact Officer: Jonathon Partridge, Corporate Policy Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The activities of the overview and scrutiny function, its committees and task forces contribute directly to the achievement of all five council priorities.

Financial:

Not applicable.

Legal:

Not applicable.

Risk Management:

Not applicable.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Not applicable.

Public health and wellbeing:

Not applicable.

Community Safety:

Not applicable.

Sustainability:

Not applicable.

Procurement:

Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny

This report relates to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATION:

that the Council notes the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the municipal year 2013/14.

1. Part D1 (paragraph 6.1.2) of the Council's constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel (OSCP) report annually to full Council on the workings of the overview and scrutiny function.
2. The attached report has been approved by the OSCP for presentation to full Council.
3. The report reflects the outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the 2013/14 municipal year.
4. Council is asked to note the contents of the Annual Report.

Appendices:

Appendix – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (2013/14)

Background Papers: none

Appendix

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Central Bedfordshire Overview and Scrutiny Committee annual report for May 2013 to April 2014

Contents

Chapter	Page
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What is overview & scrutiny?	
How does overview & scrutiny add value?	
The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees	
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Social Care, Health & Housing OSC	
Sustainable Communities OSC	
Task Forces	
Engagement	
Getting involved	

If you have any comments on this report, or would like to see any of the papers that are referred to, please contact Jonathon Partridge, Corporate Policy Manager on **0300 300 4634** or jonathon.partridge@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Introduction

Throughout 2013/14 the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) have considered a wide range of issues contributing to the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Plan (2012 to 2016). This annual report reflects on the value the committees have added during the year and highlights some of the activity and outcomes that have been achieved by the Council following the consideration of many of these reports at OSC meetings.

Throughout 2013/14 the OSCs have engaged in several major pieces of work and in particular some items with a significant amount of public interest. The Sustainable Communities OSC welcomed a large number of public attendees when it scrutinised the draft Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. The Children's Services OSC welcomed a large number of representatives from a range of organisations in relation to its review of the impact on children of living in circumstances of domestic abuse/violence. These meetings are an example of the unique opportunity that is provided by the Overview and Scrutiny process to engage residents and professionals in the Council's decision making process.

Throughout 2013/14 the Chairmen of the Committees have discussed the importance of the process and the OSCs adding value to the Council and as detailed in this annual report our activity over the next year will focus on the importance of Overview and Scrutiny driving improvement.

I would like to use this opportunity to personally thank everyone who attended or contributed to any of our OSCs during the year.



Councillor David McVicar

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel

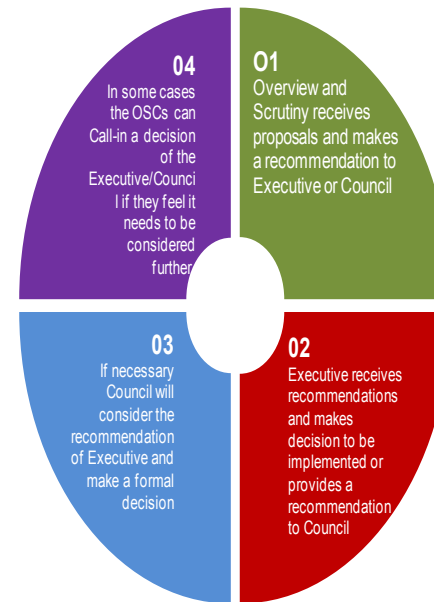
What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny provides an opportunity for elected Councillors and residents to discuss and comment on the Council's policies, plans and strategies before they are implemented. Meetings are normally held in public and residents are encouraged to attend to ask questions and make comments on the reports on the agenda. Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs), made up of non-Executive Councillors and co-opted parent governor representatives and diocesan representatives are held throughout the year to consider proposals and whilst they do not make decisions they provide recommendations to the Executive or full Council. These recommendations will be considered before the Council makes any final decisions.

OSCs can also undertake in-depth reviews of particular topics. These reviews involve a small number of committee members who will review the issue in more detail and consider evidence from various sources to provide a report and recommendations.

If committee members feel it is necessary they can also "call-in" decisions of the Executive. During a call-in a committee will re-consider a decision that has been made to determine whether the decision should be implemented straight away or referred back to the decision maker to be reconsidered.

Scrutiny committees can consider a wide range of issues but they also have statutory responsibilities in relation to scrutiny of health and crime and disorder matters. Issues relating to Crime and disorder will be considered at least once a year and any substantial



changes to health services within Central Bedfordshire must be reviewed by the scrutiny committees before they are implemented.

How does Overview and Scrutiny add value?

The OSCs add value to the Council in following ways:-

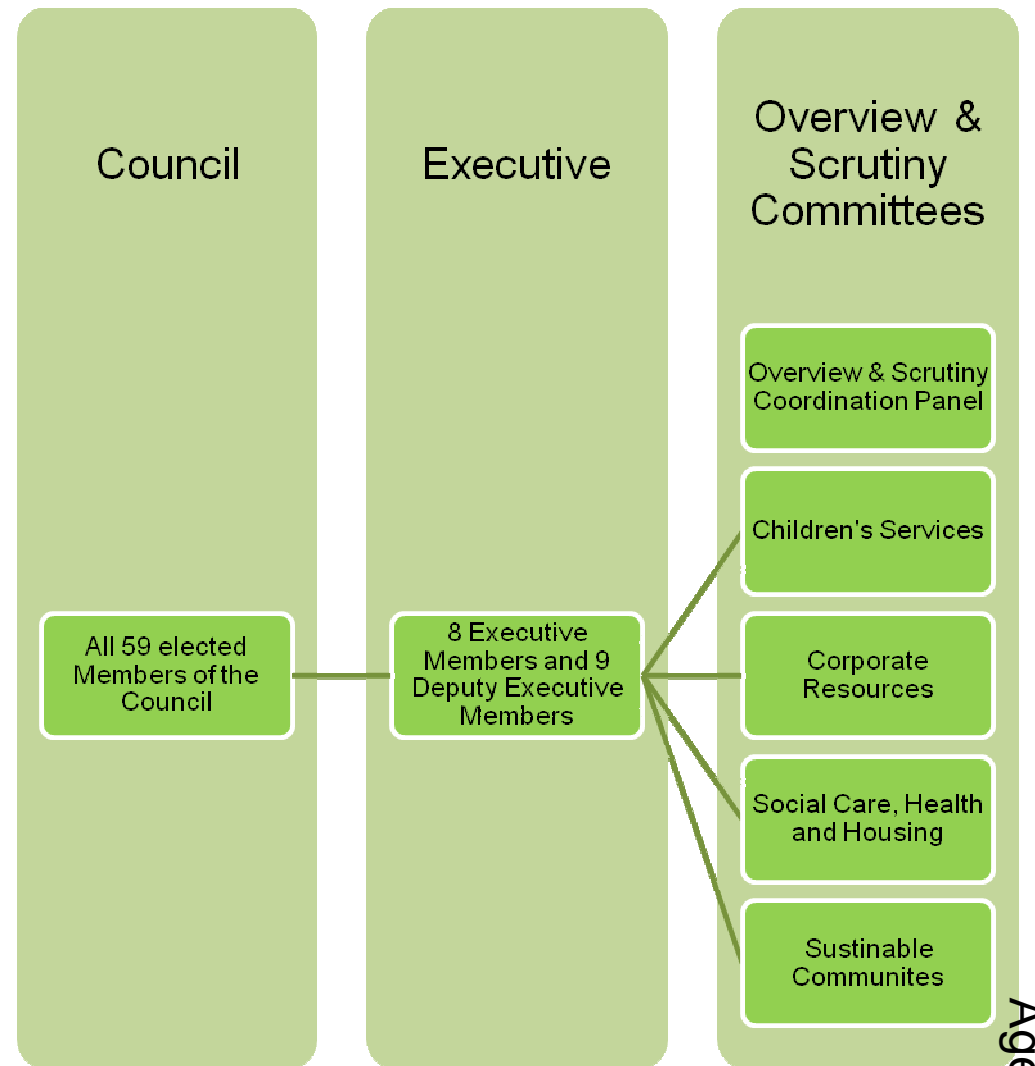


The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees

There are four OSCs in Central Bedfordshire, each of which meet seven to ten times a year and are aligned to the Council's services. There is also a Co-ordination Panel (OSCP) consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the OSCs, which meets quarterly.

In addition to the elected Members appointed to the OSCs, there are three parent governors and two diocesan representatives, one for each of the Church of England and Roman Catholic churches appointed to the Children's Services OSC. A representative of Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch also attends meetings of the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC as an observer.

The remainder of this Annual Report is organised into sections that sets out some of the work undertaken by each of the OSCs during the period May 2013 to April 2014.



Children's Services OSC

Throughout 2013/14 the Children's Services OSC has considered various reports contributing to the Councils priority of improving educational attainment. The Committee also provides a forum to engage with parent governor and diocesan representatives who are statutory co-opted Members with voting rights on education issues. In addition to receiving reports provided by the Council the Committee has also received the outcomes of Ofsted inspections, annual reports from the Schools Resilience Forum and has engaged with the Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The Committee also held a themed meeting to discuss with a wide range of guests the impact on children of living in family circumstances of domestic abuse/violence.

Strategic risks in Children's Services

In June 2013 the Committee reviewed a strategic risk within the Children's Services directorate of "failure to work to access sufficient resources to respond quickly enough to rapid changes or a failure to implement new child protection procedures, and update guidance and share good practice". The Executive Member and Director of Children's Services/Deputy Chief Executive provided the Committee with assurance as to the mitigating actions for this risk and the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The advice that had previously been provided to the Committee that the Council's overall children's social care caseload would increase and Members needed to be aware of and accept this.
- The importance of ensuring that appropriate funding was allocated to children's social care service in comparison to other services.
- The ways in which the Council lobbied Government for additional resources

The Committee noted that this risk was being scrutinised in several different ways including via the Local Safeguarding Board. In light of the assurance they had received at the meeting a further detailed report was not deemed necessary.

Home to School Transport Policy

In December 2013 the Committee received a report outlining proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy in order to enhance clarity and reflect entitlement criteria. The Committee recommended that the Executive consider a range of issues prior implementing the strategy that included endorsing the production of a plain-English guide in consultation with parents, carers and partners and the need to refer throughout to children walking

Children's Services OSC

between home and school and walking with 'reasonable safety', which needed to be cross-referenced with the section on safeguarding. These comments were presented to the Executive at their meeting in February 2014 by the Chairman of the OSC and were incorporated into the final Policy.

The Impact on children of living in family circumstances of domestic violence and abuse

In February 2014 the Committee met with invited professionals to discuss the impact on children of living in circumstances of domestic abuse/domestic violence. The purpose of the meeting was to; increase the understanding of Members in relation to the prevalence of incidents; consider how best to support a multi-agency partnership approach to deal with the issue; and agree some outcome focused recommendations on how to enhance the offer to children in this situation. The Committee raised a series of recommendations and comments in relation to the following four key themes:-

- Early intervention;
- Healthy relationships and identifying the impact of domestic abuse;
- Providing support; and
- Signposting and communication.

These recommendations will be presented to the Executive in July 2014 with a plan from the Deputy Executive Members on how the recommendations will be taken forward. A progress report on the implementation of these recommendations will also be presented to the OSC later in the year.

Early Help Offer

In June 2013 the Committee received a report that outlined the revised and updated Early Help Offer to families in Central Bedfordshire in light of the publication of the Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance (2013). The purpose was to provide Members of the Committee with an opportunity to inform proposals prior to them being received by the Executive. In response Members recommended that several comments be considered in order to make amendments to a publication before it was published. Specifically the Committee commented on the importance of supporting families prior to the birth of a child as well as needing to ensure that children's centres were integrated as part of the Offer and the way in which performance was monitored. Members also raised concerns that parents would view the Offer as intrusive and not provide their support. It was recommended that as people's needs changed over time the information held by the Council would need to be updated periodically to reflect personal circumstances.

The development of early intervention, early help delivered through children's centres

In April 2014 the Committee reviewed various options for developing the Council's early intervention offer delivered through Children's Centres. In light of the proposals the Committee discussed several issues such as:-

- Whether effective arrangements were in place with GPs to encourage the use of support.
- The ways in which the Council could encourage residents who needed support but did not use Children's Centres to make best use of it.

Children's Services OSC

- Whether proof could be provided that children did not require support beyond two years of age.
- Whether other local authorities were considering similar changes in the way that services were delivered.
- Whether the impetus for change related solely to the current financial climate.

The Committee requested that the range of views provided be made available to the Executive, which included support for the principal of targeted early intervention and the inclusion of a range of models in the consultation in addition to making clear the alternative provision that would be available for children not included in the identified age range.

Inspections and school performance

The Committee also reviewed the outcomes of Ofsted inspections and review of services for Looked After Children (LAC) so that Members could review the outcomes and the implementation of an associated action plan that related to; quality of practice and care planning for LAC; quality Assurance and performance management; educational support to LAC; health arrangements for LAC/Leaving Care; and next steps. This presentation led to the identification of a number of specific topics identified by Members for the work programme.

Other overview items:

In light of their 'overview' role the Committee also considered and contributed to a range of other items including the following:-

- The accountability framework for school outcomes, which Members scrutinised to enhance their awareness of the current framework.

- An overview of the troubled families initiative where Members highlighted the importance of sharing data and encouraging partners to collaborate effectively in order to achieve successful outcomes.
- Annual report for the adoption and fostering services whereby the Committee scrutinised the speed of the process for taking cases through the courts.
- A meeting with the Independent Chairman of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (CBSCB) to review their annual report and discuss concerns.
- The annual report for the resilience group for schools and other settings for which the Committee highlighted concerns and recommended changes to the manner in which guidance was provided to schools including the consistency with which schools managed resilience.
- A review of elective home education to understand the extent of home education currently being delivered in Central Bedfordshire, whereby the Committee requested the Director to discuss with the Children's Trust the Council's approach to support education for minority communities.
- A review of the Children and Young People's Plan to determine the progress of implementing the objectives of the Plan and comment on specific issues.
- An update on the provision of health services for children.
- The annual report for the Children's Trust, to enable Members to provide comments to the Children's Trust in relation to specific concerns that included targets for domestic abuse referrals and the Council's rank in relation to statistical neighbours for the number of children who achieved a good level of development in their early years.

Children's Services OSC

- Changes in the school curriculum to enable Members to comment on proposed changes and highlight comments and concerns relating to proposed changes to the school curriculum.

Corporate Resources OSC

The Corporate Resources OSC has a wide remit that contributes to each of the Council's priorities. The committee has scrutinised a range of policies and strategies and maintains an overview of the budgets and performance of each of the Council's directorates in addition to the scrutiny that is provided by each of the other committees. This committee also takes a lead in relation to scrutinising the Council's draft budget and during 2013/14 whilst each of the Committees received the budget proposals specific to their area this Committee received the consolidated views of all of the Committees to make a rounded view to the Executive before a final budget was approved. This committee was also the only one during 2013/14 to receive and consider a call-in regarding a decision of the Executive.

Revenue & Benefits service performance & impact of the Welfare Reforms

In July 2013 the Committee received a report requested by Members on performance of the Revenues and Benefits service and the impact of the welfare reform. The report highlighted the impact arising from the introduction of Welfare Reforms and that whilst information was being collated on the impact of the reforms on residents at the time it was too early to make any assessment. There had been a large increase in the numbers of applications for discretionary housing payments as a result of the new regulations that limited the level of housing benefit payments to the of bedrooms being occupied.

Members commented on the introduction of Universal Credit in October 2013, which would be administered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The Deputy Leader and Executive Member was urged to request the Local Government Association (LGA) to lobby Government to introduce partnership working between the DWP and the Council to ensure a smooth transition to the new scheme. Members also extended their thanks to each member of staff for their outstanding achievement in dealing with the large increase in workload.

Farm Estate Strategy

In October 2013 the Committee received the Farm Estate Strategy with a view to providing comments before it was considered by the Executive. The Committee raised concerns regarding the number of short tenures being offered and concerns at proposals to reduce the number of holdings, such as farm houses and redundant buildings. In light of the questions raised the Director agreed to report further

Corporate Resources OSC

on aspects of the proposals and that some of the issues raised would be considered via a new Farmers' Forum. Members also recommended that a consultation be undertaken when considering a change of use for a piece of land.

Draft Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (Housing Service) Business Plan

In January 2014 the Committee received a report in order to scrutinise the Council's proposals to increase tenant's rents by an average of 5.46% in line with the Government's rent restructuring policy, whilst also making the provision of £220k available specifically to tackle hardship and facilitate moves to smaller properties. Members queried the average market rents and requested that officers provide a written response to questions that included a comparison between the rents at the Council's Sheltered properties with the rents in General Needs properties. In light of the scrutiny of these proposals Members endorsed the budget and Business Plan but requested that officers carry out an in-depth study during the year to address the concerns of inequity in rents.

Asset Plan

In March 2014 the Committee received an updated version of the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Plan (CAMSAP) that would support the Council in delivering its corporate objectives. The Asset Plan included a regional asset plans, rural farms and land asset plans and proposals for joint working with the Regeneration Service and Landlord Services. In addition to supporting the plans the Committee discussed the content of the plan and agreed that a clearer performance cascade in addition to clearer timescales for delivering the plan was required. It was also proposed that a

workshop be arranged for other Members to enhance awareness of the plan and engage with a wider group of Members.

Central Bedfordshire Next Generation Network

During 2013/14 there was also one decision of the Executive called in by the Corporate Resources OSC. In September 2013 the Committee received a presentation relating to proposals to enter into a Central Bedfordshire Next Generation Network (NGN) that would consolidate the provision of all corporate and school data network, mobile and fixed telephony services into a single supply contract so as to assist in achieving the MTFP savings for Information Assets. The Members of the Committee raised concerns that they did not feel they had a sufficient level of detail in order to scrutinise the proposals for the NGN and also raised specific concerns regarding the level of influence the Council would be able to exert over the contract due to the nature of the partnership arrangement; that a 10 year contract was considered to be too long, a three-year contract period was considered to be more suitable; whether sufficient diligence would be following by the Council in signing such a significant contract; and whether the proposed supplier was fit for purpose.

The Executive was made aware of these concerns and resolved to adopt the approach following which it was called in on the grounds that the OSC were not given sufficient information about the proposal to make an informed decision; detailed financial assessments had not been provided and the details of the contract were not available. Following further detailed consideration of the item several concerns remained for some Members but the

Corporate Resources OSC

Committee agreed that no further action be taken and the Executive decision be effective immediately.

Following the conclusion of the Call-in process a nine year contract was signed for Central Bedfordshire Council ending 31st December 2022. To reflect the request for a more flexible contract term break clauses were incorporated into the contract at 3, 5 and 7 years (31st December 2016, 2018 and 2020 respectively). The Provider will require 6 months' prior written notice of any termination (e.g. by 21st June 2016 for a break at 3 years). There will be no termination charges. A project to migrate data and fixed telephony services had been initiated and was underway.

Other overview items:

In light of their 'overview' role the Committee also considered and contributed to a range of other items including the following:-

- Your Space 2 updates to inform Members of progress
- Customer Strategy

Social Care, Health and Housing OSC

The Council is required to scrutinise any substantial changes to health services in Central Bedfordshire. The Social Care, Health and Housing OSC undertakes that responsibility and during 2014 began to split its agendas into two parts. The first part of committee meetings focuses on external health scrutiny matters and the second part focuses on internal social care and housing matters. This provides a visible focus on the role and importance of health scrutiny within Central Bedfordshire. This committee supports the Council in the delivery of its priorities to promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable. Throughout 2014 the Committee has provided a forum for holding external health services such as the East of England Ambulance Trust, Bedford Hospital and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to account in addition to enhancing awareness of the Council's developing policies and the ways in which they support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Health Scrutiny

Joint Community Bed Review and Biggleswade Hospital

In June 2013 the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) presented to the Committee a review of community bed provision in Central Bedfordshire and recommendations for improvement. The report outlined priorities for joint development between NHS Bedfordshire, BCCG and the Council that included developing community bed based services in the north of Central Bedfordshire by amending the admission criteria for Biggleswade Hospital; developing urgent care pathways; and developing a single approach to commissioning care home services. The report also outlined a future model to ensure services were designed around the customer and the standards of care were improved.

The Committee endorsed the priorities and model of care outlined in the report and highlighted the importance of ensuring that Central Bedfordshire residents were not overlooked in light of there being no district hospital in the area and that residents had the same options available to them as those in Luton and Bedford.

In addition to the Joint Community Bed Review the Committee continued to scrutinise throughout the year the admissions criteria for Biggleswade Hospital. In light of public concerns that South East Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT) were proactively preventing residents from being admitted to the hospital the Committee requested the attendance of BCCG and SEPT on several occasions to answer public questions and to advise Members on admissions criteria and the use of rehabilitation beds at Biggleswade Hospital. Members were able

Social Care, Health and Housing OSC

to discuss specific concerns regarding communication and transparency, whether a clear action plan relating to the Community Bed Review had been prepared; whether plans to provide a Short Stay Medical Unit in the north of Central Bedfordshire were being considered.

Following the Committee meeting an action plan for the community bed review was produced but it was soon superseded by first the CBC Pioneer bid submission and then implementation of the national Integration Transformation Fund, now the Better Care Fund (BCF). All of this groundwork however means that BCF plans are on a sounder footing, given the ability to learn from other areas and to benefit from the system leadership input that resulted from our Pioneer submission. BCF plans do include consideration of services in north Central Bedfordshire that will build on the learning from the SSMU in the southern area in the most appropriate way for northern residents. The CCG Performance team has not been able to split data. As part of their ongoing review of the BCF metrics they hope to be able to use medeanalytics to provide a proxy measure to enable monthly reporting but splitting Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire data remains a problem. Work is currently ongoing and the CCG are liaising with public health to develop robust monitoring. The CCG is actively working to deliver a sustainable solution.

Bedford Hospital

On several occasions throughout the year the Committee received reports and updates from the Chief Executive of Bedford Hospital with regards performance and in particular the closure of the paediatric ward at the Hospital in light of specific concerns.

Members of the Committee requested that the Chief Executive of the hospital continue to provide updates so that Members could receive reassurance that performance concerns were being addressed. Members also attended a visit at the hospital to scrutinise the levels of performance first-hand. In light of the updates provided throughout the year the Committee was able to scrutinise the turnaround at the hospital and were encouraged to see that governance and performance in relation to services had improved throughout the year.

Bedfordshire Plan for Patients (2013/14)

In April 2013 the Committee received a report that set out the risks for health in Central Bedfordshire and the commissioning intentions for the BCCG for 2013-14. In light of the report the Committee raised several concerns relating to performance, which was below the national level for 65s and over, who had been discharge from hospital and remain at home and concerns that BCCG could not meet targets relating to the steep increase from 66% (2011 target) to 80% in 2015 to raise the number of smokers who have quit. The Committee also commented on the importance of ensuring that future reports provided an appropriate focus on Central Bedfordshire residents.

East of England Ambulance Trust

On several occasions during 2013-14 the Committee received updates from the East of England Ambulance Trust in light of an inspection report that highlighted significant performance failings. The Committee received updates from officers with regards to the Trust's turnaround report and continued to scrutinise the plans until they were confident that plans were in place to address the failings.

Social Care, Health and Housing OSC

Social Care & Housing

Park Homes Licensing Fees Policy

In January 2014 the Committee received a report that invited their comments on the draft Park Homes Licensing Fees Policy, which gave the Council the ability to recover costs associated with the licensing of park home sites. The Committee reviewed the outcomes of a recent consultation and the concerns that had been raised and queried several aspects of the policy specifically relating to the support that was available for vulnerable residents. In addition to endorsing the Policy the Committee recommended that additional information be incorporated to ensure that assistance for vulnerable residents was available.

The Park Homes Fees Policy will form part of an overarching Park Homes Strategy which will shortly be developed to include details of support and assistance to vulnerable residents. This strategy will be presented to the appropriate committees in due course. A residents' engagement event was held on 22 January 2014, which provided advice on a broad range of park home related matters and more recently the webpage was updated to provide further information including details of the approved policy. Further events for residents will be arranged in the future and the Council webpage will be enhanced to provide further advice and guidance.

Review of Sheltered Housing

In July 2013 the Committee received a report that set out the proposed sheltered housing standard and the proposal to re-designate some schemes where the stock consisted of two and three floor properties without lift access to 55+ residents. The meeting provided the opportunity for a representative of the Sheltered Tenants Action Group to set out their concerns so that Members could address these with officers before making a recommendation to the Executive. Whilst the Committee supported the scheme it was recommended that further investigation be undertaken into the proposal to segment some schemes to be re-designated to 55+ Housing.

A full consultation was undertaken following the meeting and all schemes will be revisited again to open a dialogue with regards to what the standard means for each scheme. This discussion will include what it would mean if some schemes were no longer thought suitable for older people so that a consensus can be found on how we move forward on such changes. These further discussions will be informed by the issues raised by residents.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

In April 2014 the Committee received a report from members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) in relation to an investigation of the Council's handling of reports of anti-social behaviour. The TSP report outlined 28 recommendations for improvement for which officers commented changes relating to improving communications and web presence and developing a Learning and Development Plan would be implemented to respond to the recommendations. Officers also agreed to seek out best practice models from high performing councils to ensure continued improvements in handling

Social Care, Health and Housing OSC

anti-social behaviour complaints. Members were keen to be kept aware of the implementation of the Panel's recommendations for which timescales were proposed to be added to identify where improvements had been made.

Following the meeting the action plan was implemented within the Estates Management Team and of the 28 actions highlighted from the report nearly half of them were completed by mid-May 2014. From the remaining outstanding actions all had been started and were on target to be completed within the timescales agreed by the panel. The implemented changes resulted in some positive feedback from residents on how the service was improving and provided a positive outlook for achieving a high performing ASB service in the future.

Other overview items:

In light of their 'overview' role the Committee also considered and contributed to a range of other items including the following:-

- An overview of performance in relation to empty homes so that Members could identify those properties within their area that had been unoccupied for 12 months or more.
- The framework agreement for care homes in Central Bedfordshire, whereby Members scrutinised the period of notice given to care home providers to improve and the awareness of training that was available to social care providers.
- A report on the retender of domiciliary care, so Members could scrutinise aspects of the contract terms that had been agreed and the ways in which the Council would monitor the impact of the retendering exercise.

- A report on the Care Bill and the Better Care Fund to increase Member's awareness of the significance of these programmes and their implications for Central Bedfordshire residents.
- The annual adult social care customer feedback report in order to review the number of service compliments and complaints.
- The annual report of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board, to advise Members that no serious case reviews had taken place in the area of the previous year and to provide assurance that rigorous processes were in place should an issue arise.
- A report regarding the Musculoskeletal (MSK) Service Delivery Model to advise Members of a change in service delivery so as they could determine whether it was 'substantial' in their role as a health scrutiny committee.
- A report on mental health and isolation so that Members could scrutinise the services that were available in Central Bedfordshire with a view to understanding how residents were supported.

Sustainable Communities OSC

Throughout 2013/14 the Sustainable Communities OSC has scrutinised policies to support the Council in achieving its objectives of enhancing Central Bedfordshire by creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow. Due to the broad nature of the Community Services and Regeneration and Business Support Service directorates the committee has also focused on the Council's priorities of better infrastructure and the delivery of great universal services. The Committee has focused on a range of leisure services items and held large public meetings with regard to the draft Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. There have also been public meetings at which the Committee have scrutinised the Community safety Plan, Bedfordshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Physical Activity Strategy and Leisure Strategy

At several meetings during 2013 and 2014 the Committee scrutinised reports relating to the draft Leisure Strategy and specifically the chapters that had been developed as the result of an audit and assessment process in relation to physical activity and leisure facilities. The Committee meetings provided Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the facilities that had been identified in the audit process and raise several concerns in relation to:-

- the need for overall ownership;
- the absence of a clearly defined action plan;
- the importance of partnership working, particularly to identify alternative sources of funding;
- the viability of a leisure centre at Houghton Regis (HRLC); and
- whether appropriate arrangements were in place to ensure that CIL contributions would provide adequate funding for facilities.

In addition to providing comments to the Executive the Committee recommended that strong action be taken to access money to support the delivery of the Physical Activity Strategy via Bedfordshire and Luton County Sports Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

In October 2013 the Committee also received a report on the implementation of the Leisure Facilities Strategy, including the findings of the Flitwick Leisure Centre Feasibility Study. In light of the report Members recommended that the Council needed to focus on developing new leisure facilities in the growth areas of Central Bedfordshire.

Sustainable Communities OSC

Following the comments of the OSC the Council continued to prepare action plans for each of the chapters of the strategy. Several alternative sources of funding were identified and successful bids for funds made to various sources that included Team Beds & Luton (County Sports Partnership), Sport England and Community Sports Activation Fund. An application for £2m capital investment at Flitwick Leisure Centre from Sport England was also due to be submitted in May 2014.

Action plans were being developed to provide a comprehensive costing of prioritised projects to inform the Council's CIL and the Planning Obligations Strategy to ensure that new developments make appropriate contribution toward prioritised facilities. Support was also provided from Beds and Luton County Sports Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board

The viability of HRLC was tested during the procurement of a new contract and a decision taken to include HRLC in a new 7 year contract with the swimming pool being reopened as the contract provided a very positive improvement in financial performance. Chapter 1 also assessed the need for and viability of each of the Council's current leisure centres. Policies identified the provision of an improved replacement for HRLC close to the existing site (comprising 6 land 25m pool & a range of other facilities) as a high priority for the medium to long term to overcome the lack of current capacity and address the Houghton Regis urban extension.

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour

In October 2013 the Committee received a requested item on the Council's performance relating to incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour

during which the Committee were able question Chief Inspector Tania Coulson of Bedfordshire Police. In light of the report the Committee queried the level of activity undertaken by the Police to safeguard vulnerable people, the links between deprivation and incidents of ASB and the importance of communication between partners in order to understand and respond to incidents of ASB. In addition the Committee discussed in detail concerns regarding the format of the data provided to the Committee on incidents of ASB. It was recommended that in the future data on ASB should include a quantum of ASB per 1,000 population and if possible a breakdown of types of incidents in relation to each ward. Officers accepted these recommendations and whilst further reports have not yet been received officers are aware of the need to present information in an alternative format and to report incidents against three classifications (personal, environmental and nuisance).

Community Safety Plan and Priorities

In light of their statutory role as the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee the Committee held a public meeting in January 2014 to discuss the Community Safety Plan and Priorities for 2014/15 at which various partners, including the Police, Fire and Probation Services were in attendance in addition to the Police and Crime Commissioners. The Committee scrutinised several issues include the levels of support that were provided to children who were impacts by living in circumstances of domestic abuse; the prevalence and manner in which authorities were responding to repeat incidents of anti-social behaviour; confidence in the Police Force crime statistics; and the current police establishment levels and plans to close police stations as part of a review of the police estate. In light of the meeting the Committee endorsed the

Sustainable Communities OSC

community safety plan and priorities for 2014/15 for adoption, which were supported by the Executive and adopted by the Community Safety Partnership.

Following the meeting crime in Central Bedfordshire (2013/14) has seen a 3% increase compared to the previous year. The agreed CSP priorities will provide a clear focus with statutory and voluntary groups to reduce the number of burglaries and support those who are vulnerable from becoming victims of crime, which would have a significant impact on performance in this area. A corporate review has also been undertaken with regards to Domestic Abuse, by the Head of Community Safety for the Director of Children's Services. The final report will be tabled at the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and recommendations will be made as to next steps and the way forward. The ASB, Crime and Policing Act also received royal assent in March 2014 that will have a significant impact in the way the CSP and the local authority responds to ASB. A Bedfordshire-wide Task and Finish group has been set up to work through the legislation changes and ensure Central Bedfordshire is prepared for these to come into effect in the autumn 2014 so as to drive improvement in relation to the CSP priorities.

Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan

In January 2014 the Committee held a public meeting to receive the findings of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and introduced the changes to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan (GTLP) in light of public responses. In addition to the 60 residents in attendance the Committee received questions from 14 residents in relation to the draft proposals contained in the GTLP. The Committee used the opportunity to engage with the public to

receive additional feedback to compliment that which had been received during the public consultation. The Committee provided an opportunity for Members to consider the proposals in more detail with contributions from residents so that the recommendations delivered to the Executive were delivered in light of that public input. The Committee endorsed the GTAA in addition to recommending that 131 pitches and 20 plots for travelling showpeople be allocated across seven sites. These recommendations were received by the Executive who approved the Plan for the purpose of further public consultation. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported directly to an external inspector who will determine during 2014 whether the Plan is 'sound' so that it can be implemented.

Other overview items:

In light of their 'overview' role the Committee also considered and contributed to a range of other items prior to their consideration by the Executive that included the following:-

- The East West Rail Western Section Project;
- The Planning Enforcement Plan;
- Central Bedfordshire Design Guide;
- The Arlesey Masterplan;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) guidance; and
- Funding for the Local Area Transport Plan.

The Committee also received items requested by Members in relation to the Council's Parking Strategy, in order to review performance in relation to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and street maintenance, in order to review the Council's maintenance scheme.

Sustainable Communities OSC

Task Forces

During 2013/14 the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC has commissioned and undertaken two detailed task force reviews as detailed below.

Hospital Discharge Performance

One CBC Task Force review was concluded during 2013/14 relating to hospital discharge. The review provided Members with an opportunity to raise awareness of the main issues for residents of Central Bedfordshire in relation to experience of discharge from hospital and focus on issues relating to communication and raising awareness of the services that were available. Members took the opportunity to meet with GPs and other health professionals in order to develop a greater understanding of the local issues. The Committee report detailed several recommendations for which a report was endorsed by the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC and a progress report provided by Bedford Hospital, the CCG and the Council's own officers.

As a result of the report the majority of focus has been placed on discharges of CBC residents from both Luton & Dunstable and Bedford Hospitals, with significant input happening over winter in particular. As a result of the lessons learned from interventions trialed over the winter period, plans are being included within the Better Care Fund to ensure that appropriate and timely discharges take place.

Joint Health OSC review of the Bedfordshire health economy

Members of the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC have also been engaged in a Joint Health OSC with Members of Bedford Borough Council in light of their statutory role to scrutinise 'substantial' changes in health services that impact on residents. Bedfordshire CCG and Milton Keynes CCG have been consulting stakeholders throughout the year on proposals to deliver a sustainable and locally-led model of healthcare for the area. The JHOSC has been engaged throughout this process as a statutory consultee to provide Members an opportunity to question the proposals as they develop and ensure that the CCG has put in place adequate proposals to inform and consult residents. A formal consultation will be undertaken later in the year and the JHOSC will provide a response as a formal consultee and scrutinise the outcomes of the consultation before making a recommendation regarding the final proposals for implementation.

Engagement activity

Each OSC agenda has a standing item for “questions, statements and deputations” and residents are encouraged attend meetings to ask questions and contribute to discussions during the meeting. In summary this year there were approximately 150 members of the public in attendance at meetings and the OSCs engaged with the public and partners in the following ways:-

32 questions, statements and deputations

By registering to speak members of the public can attend and ask questions at OSC meetings regarding any of the items on the agenda. During 2013/14 questions were raised in relation to the following:-

- Arlesey Masterplan
- Biggleswade Hospital
- CRB checks.
- Draft Budget for the HRA Business Plan
- Draft Development Strategy
- East West Rail Western Section
- Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan
- Services for Children on the autistic spectrum
- The Community Bed Review

20 organisations attended meetings

The OSCs can also invite specific witnesses and professionals to attend meetings where they feel it would be helpful to receive additional information. During 2013/14 representatives of the following attended meetings:-

- Arlesey Village Agent
- Bedford Hospital
- Bedfordshire and Luton Fire & Rescue Service
- Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Bedfordshire Probation Trust
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- East of England Ambulance Service
- Freedom Programme
- Hawthorn Park Community Lower School
- Health Relationships Programme
- Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
- Home Group
- Safeguarding Children Board
- Schools Compliance and Risk Group
- SEPT
- Sorted
- Sue Ryder Care
- Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Getting involved

The residents of Central Bedfordshire are Overview and Scrutiny's most useful resource for finding out what the key issues are. Residents, community groups, local businesses and others that live or work in the area can make valuable contributions to much of the work Overview and Scrutiny does.

The work programme of Overview and Scrutiny can be flexible, so if there is an issue that you would like to see tackled or if you would just like to find out more about Overview and Scrutiny at Central Bedfordshire Council please contact the Overview and Scrutiny team.

Details regarding forthcoming meetings, including copies of the reports and a list of future meeting dates can be obtained from the Overview and Scrutiny website at the following link:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/committees-and-decision-making/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx>

All OSC meetings are open to the public and a list of future meeting dates is available from the above website. Residents are also welcome to come and speak and provide their views at meetings. If you would like to attend a meeting and speak please contact us in advance.

Contact us...

Për Informacion

Per Informazione

Za Informacije

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Za Informacja

by telephone: 0300 300 4634

by email: scrutiny@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

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Meeting: Council
Date: 12 June 2014
Subject: Audit Committee Activity – Annual Report
Report of: Chairman of the Audit Committee
Summary: This report to Council summarises the activities of the Audit Committee, as required under the Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference.

Advising Officer:

Contact Officer: Kathy Riches, Head of Internal Audit and Risk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

An effective Audit Committee is an integral part of the internal control and governance arrangements of the Council. As such it supports all the Council’s priorities.

Financial:

1. None directly from this report.

Legal:

2. None directly from this report.

Risk Management:

3. One of the purposes of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment and therefore supports the overall risk management framework.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. None directly from this report.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. None directly from this report.

Public Health

6. None directly from this report.

Community Safety:

7. None directly from this report.

Sustainability:

8. None directly from this report.

Procurement:

9. None directly from this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the Council notes the work activity of the Audit Committee.

Background

10. Central Bedfordshire Council has within its Constitution a requirement to have in place an Audit Committee. Paragraph 6.2.2 of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference requires a report to be made by the Chairman of the Audit Committee to Council on the Committee's activities twice a year. This report covers the Committee's activity during 2013/14.
11. Throughout the year the Committee has continued to make a positive contribution to the Council's overall governance and control arrangements, including risk.

Membership and Meetings

12. There are seven members of the Audit Committee The Committee is chaired by Councillor Mike Blair, and Councillor David Bowater serves as vice chairman. There were some revisions to the membership of the Committee during the year.
13. The Audit Committee has met formally on five occasions since the start of the financial year.

Internal Audit Activity

14. The Committee has continued to monitor the work of Internal Audit. During the year, the Audit Committee:
 - Considered and approved the 2013/14 Internal Audit Strategy, Strategic Audit Plan and Annual Plan. This strategy is a high level statement of how the Council meets the requirements of the Account and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended 2011), which require that the Council maintains an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and its system of internal control, in accordance with proper audit practices. The Annual Audit Plan for 2013/14 represented the final year of the three year strategic plan.

- Considered the requirements of the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which became effective from April 2013, along with an action plan produced by the Head of Internal Audit and Risk, aimed at ensuring future full compliance with the standards. An updated Internal Audit Charter, reflecting the PSIAS was also considered and endorsed by the Audit Committee at its meeting in January 2014.
- Considered the Internal Audit Annual Report 2012/13, prepared by the Head of Internal Audit and Risk, which presented an opinion on the effectiveness of Central Bedfordshire Council's internal control environment and summarised the internal audit activity upon which that opinion was based. The report concluded that, in general, the key controls in place continued to be adequate and effective such that reasonable assurance could be placed on the operation of the Council's function.
- Received regular internal audit progress reports setting out progress against the delivery of the Internal Audit Plan. The progress reports have included Internal Audit opinions given for individual reviews. Where appropriate, officers have been requested to attend the Committee to enable the members to probe further into issues of concern and seek assurance that appropriate management action is being taken. Following a specific request from a Committee member, a report was produced on the employment of consultants and presented to the March meeting.
- Received regular reports monitoring the progress made against the implementation of high risk recommendations arising from Internal Audit inspections. The Committee has noted that the number of high risk recommendations that remain outstanding has reduced during the course of the year.
- Approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15 at its last meeting of the calendar year

Activity relating to Financial Reporting

15. During the year, the Audit Committee:

- Received a presentation on the draft 2012/13 Statement of Accounts at the 24th June 2013 meeting. All council members were invited and many took the opportunity to pose questions relating to the financial statements
- Formally approved the 2012/13 final Statement of Accounts at the 23rd September 2013 meeting, following the audit.
- Considered, at the 13th January 2014 meeting, a report by the Chief Finance Officer which summarised key changes in the Statement of Accounts for 2013/14 and internal procedures for producing the statements.

External Audit Issues

16. The Committee has monitored the work of the Council's external auditors. During the year, the Audit Committee:
- Considered the Ernst and Young External Audit Plan which set out the proposed audit approach and scope for the 2012/13 audit.
 - Received and considered regular external audit progress reports
 - Received and considered the Audit Fee Letter from Ernst and Young, setting out the audit and certification fees for 2013/14
 - Considered the Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2012/13, and
 - At the last meeting of the calendar year, considered a report on the approach to the delivery of the 2013/14 audit.
17. Ernst and Young's Results Report was also received by the Committee in September 2013. This report summarised the key findings from their audit, and provided the Committee the opportunity to consider the issues arising. The report indicated that the accounts would receive an unqualified opinion and this was confirmed in the Annual Audit Letter presented to the Audit Committee in January 2014, which also confirmed that the Council had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness – Value for Money - in its use of resources.

Annual Governance Statement

18. The Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement at its meeting in June, and, subject to minor amendment, approved it as a basis for further input prior to submission to the Leader and Chief Executive. This statement is intended to demonstrate how the Council has achieved the principles contained in the Code of Corporate Governance. The final Annual Governance Statement was presented to the Committee alongside the 2012/13 Statement of Accounts in September 2013.

Risk Management Activity

19. The Committee has received and considered regular risk management summary reports during the year, enabling it to discharge its responsibilities in this area.

Anti Fraud and Corruption Activity

20. Details of the outcomes of special investigations undertaken by Internal Audit have regularly been reported to the Committee, along with progress made in the investigation of queries arising as a result of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise.

21. At its March 2014 meeting, the Committee considered a report on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Fraud which updated the Committee on the work of the Benefit Fraud Investigation Team. Further regular updates on the team's work are to be presented to the Committee. The meeting also considered the planned implementation of the National Single Fraud Investigations Service (SFIS), and the implications for the Council.

Other Matters of Interest

22. The Committee has been updated throughout the year by finance staff, and both the internal and external auditors on other matters relevant to the role of the Committee. These matters include the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, revisions to the CIPFA Code of Practice, and other issues of interest such as Whole Place Community Budgets, Public Health updates, the Local Audit and Accountability Act, and the Better Care Fund. Where appropriate, the Committee has sought responses on key issues for the Council identified from these updates. During a year of significant change in matters requiring scrutiny by the Audit Committee, such guidance has proved invaluable, and the respective officers and the external auditors are to be thanked for their various contributions.

Conclusion

23. Through its work the Audit Committee has:
- provided independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and associated control environment
 - provided independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and
 - has overseen the statutory financial reporting process.
24. In discharging its role, the Committee has been supported by Internal Audit and Risk, the external auditors, and Finance staff.

Appendices: None

Background Papers:

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands, Bedfordshire

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