

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Wednesday, 10 January 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Chairman)

Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs A Barker
R D Berry
M C Blair
D Bowater
A D Brown
J Chatterley
Mrs S Clark
K M Collins
N B Costin
I Dalgarno
S Dixon
Mrs A L Dodwell
P Downing
K Ferguson
F Firth
Mrs J Freeman
E Ghent

Cllrs Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms A M W Graham
Mrs D B Gurney
Mrs C Hegley
P Hollick
J G Jamieson
K Janes
R W Johnstone
J Kane
D J Lawrence
Mrs J G Lawrence
M Liddiard
K C Matthews
Ms C Maudlin
D McVicar
R Morris
T Nicols

Cllrs A Ryan
D Shelvey
I Shingler
B J Spurr
R C Stay
Mrs T Stock
T Swain
G Tubb
A M Turner
M A G Versallion
N Warren
S Watkins
B Wells
R D Wenham
J N Young
A Zerny

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs P A Duckett
C C Gomm

Cllrs P Smith
T Woodward

Absent

Cllrs Perham
J Saunders

Cllr B Walker

Officers:	Mr Q Baker	– AD Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)
	Mr R Carr	– Chief Executive
	Mr M Coiffait	– Director of Community Services
	Mrs P Everitt	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Mr P Fraser	– Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement
	Mrs S Hobbs	– Senior Committee Services Officer
	Mr J Longhurst	– Director of Regeneration and Business
	Mrs J Ogley	– Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mrs C Shohet	– Assistant Director of Public Health
	Mr C Warboys	– Director of Resources

PRAYERS

Prayers were taken by Councillor Blair.

C/17/56 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C/17/57 Members' Interests

Councillor Mrs Gurney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 9 'Recommendations from the Executive – Central Bedfordshire Local Plan' due to her being a tenant of Manor Farm, Everton. She was absent from the Chamber during the item.

Councillor Maudlin declared a personal interest in Item 9 'Recommendations from the Executive – Central Bedfordshire Local Plan' due to her family owning a plot of land in the Northhill Ward. She was present during the item.

C/17/58 Questions, Statements and Deputations

The Chairman invited the public speakers to make their statements in accordance with the Public Participation Scheme.

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

Mr Booth spoke on behalf of the Lidlington Residents Group. He explained that the Group had conducted a survey of all residents in the village which suggested that 98% opposed the proposed development for Marston Vale. Lidlington was a small rural village and the Plan proposed a new settlement of 5,000 homes in Marston Vale. He was concerned that the infrastructure would not be in place to support the additional housing. This included improvements to junction 13 of the M1 and the upgrade of passenger services on the East West rail line. Aspley Guise had been excluded from the Plan although the site could accommodate development more readily. He proposed that the Council should allocate half of the proposed development for Marston Vale to the Aspley Guise area and in doing this it would improve the deliverability of the Plan.

Mr Baker, resident of Aspley Guise, spoke about the proposed allocation of 5,000 homes for Marston Vale. He acknowledged the work in developing the Plan against the timeline set by Government. He commented on the increasing growth in Milton Keynes and the impact of increased traffic that the proposed 5,000 homes in Marston Vale would have on the area. He raised concerns that residents in Central Bedfordshire were not aware of the Plan.

He urged the Council to reconsider the distribution of the 5,000 homes proposed for Marston Vale and address the increase in traffic. A partial review of the Plan was proposed and Mr Baker requested further details on this.

Councillor Mr Bint, Milton Keynes Council, spoke in an individual capacity and commended the Council in reaching this point with the Plan. Slowing down the process would put local development at risk as there would be more regional or national input. He was pleased that the journey between Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes had been acknowledged and that both authorities were working together. He believed it would be good for residents of both authorities to have new Local Plans and wished the Council every success for the rest of the process.

Mrs Lawrence, was pleased that the Council had listened to residents with regard to the village of Tempsford. However, she raised concern that it was still included as an area identified for future growth and consideration would be given to it in the partial review envisaged. She was concerned at the suggestion that the area had the potential for 10,000 plus homes in the area. Land East of Biggleswade, east of the allocated village, south of Sutton and west of Dunton had also been identified for future development of up to 5,000 homes. She requested that Tempsford be removed completely from the Plan. She commented on the Government's plans for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor, including the target to build one million new homes along the Corridor and felt that the process that had led to this suggestion was undemocratic.

Mr Lynch commented on the concerns of residents in Tempsford as they felt no one was listening to them. He was concerned that there had been no mention of Gibraltar Farm which was an important historical landmark. He had heard that there were plans to make the Farm into a play area and felt that this was not appropriate. He requested a firm statement by the Council about the future of house building in Central Bedfordshire. He acknowledged that houses were needed due to the increase in homelessness. He requested help from his ward Councillor to improve the pavements and street lighting in Sandy. He also requested that the Council relaunch its magazine as it kept local residents informed of what was occurring in Central Bedfordshire.

Councillor Ms McClymont, Sutton Parish Council, acknowledged the need to provide additional housing. The proposal for 51 houses in Sutton, a 50% increase in housing in the village, would not contribute to the Council's aim of maintaining the character of local villages. She believed that this was a distortion to a rural community and that housing should be evenly distributed across Central Bedfordshire. She was relieved that the development proposed for the east of Biggleswade of around 1,500 new houses was substantially lower than originally suggested. However, she was concerned that land between Dunton and Sutton had been identified for future growth with approximately 5,000 more houses. There was a lack of infrastructure to sustain a development of this size and enquired how the Council envisaged this would be achieved.

She also enquired whether the Parish Council and residents would have an opportunity to be consulted again on the identified future growth. She welcomed the countryside gap but enquired who would be responsible for this land and would the village have an input into what it was used for.

Mr Want confirmed that he supported the objections raised by Arlesey Town Council to the consultation in 2017. He was concerned about the impact that further development would have on Arlesey. He believed that the Inspector would determine that the Plan was unsound. The Plan acknowledged that there was limited capacity on the road network, particularly along the A507 as a result of the existing growth. However, the Plan was still proposing development alongside the A507 without making reference to improving the road. He felt that Members could not make an informed decision as the evidence had not been published before the meeting. He felt that the initial consultation feedback had not been listened to. If the Plan was found to be unsound, Central Bedfordshire would be at risk of having uncoordinated development across the area.

In response to the above comments, the Executive Member for Regeneration:

- acknowledged the comments made about Aspley Guise and Lidlington;
- explained that where there was a red area in the Plan for allocation it did not mean that the whole of that area would be built on;
- Members and the public were encouraged to attend the engagement meetings with developers to help influence master planning, as it was through this process that detailed proposals for each allocation would be developed, including in some areas countryside parks;
- the Canal Trust had published a document that laid out where the canal would go, including footpaths and cycle ways and this would form part of the Marston Valley proposed development;
- explained that the Council would be determining whether the draft Pre-Submission Local Plan should be approved for public consultation;
- Members and the public were encouraged to respond to the consultation and attend the drop-in sessions. Following the consultation, Officers would analyse the responses to the consultation and submit them to the Inspector. All members of the public who objected to the Plan would have the opportunity to address the Inspector;
- Tempsford was an area identified for future growth. It was not appropriate to remove the plans for Tempsford given the need to provide for future growth;
- having a Local Plan would mean that the Council retained control over where development would be located rather than it being delivered in an ad hoc way, sometimes without sufficient benefit to local communities;

- the distribution of housing was evenly spread with proposals already in the system for housing development at Wixams, Houghton Regis and Chalton;
- Government guidance had been followed as places with good roads and sustainable transport had been proposed for development;
- countryside gaps could be working fields and act as valuable protection against coalescence; and
- acknowledged the working relationship with Milton Keynes Council.

Fluoridation

Mr Gillard spoke about the comprehensive review that had been carried out by the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology on artificial water fluoridation and the impact of that fluoridation had on the human body. He believed that Public Health England were not taking the risks seriously and fluoridation was being added to drinking water in Central Bedfordshire. He wanted to know what the Council was doing to protect residents in the area.

The Executive Member for Health had met with Mr Gillard and his colleagues to discuss this issue and consider the evidence. Bedford Borough Council was carrying out a review into fluoridation and the results from this review would be considered by Central Bedfordshire Council. Public Health England had also attended the meeting with Mr Gillard and had deemed that the levels of fluoridation in drinking water was safe.

C/17/59

Recommendations from the Executive

1) Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

The Council considered a recommendation from the Executive meeting held on 9 January 2018 that the draft Pre-Submission Local Plan be approved for public consultation.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Regeneration explained:

- that Highways England and Network Rail were statutory consultees;
- developments of over 300 houses required a development brief and the function of the brief was to improve the planning development process and the quality of development, including sustainable drainage, sustainable transport and green infrastructure;
- the Council would continue to negotiate Section 106 Agreements to secure investment in necessary infrastructure;

- developers would be holding consultation events to help develop the master plans;
- failure to submit a Plan before the deadline would lead to a loss of control of the process and speculative development, with little prospect of maintaining a five year housing land supply;
- the Council would have regard to affordable housing, shared ownership, specialist accommodation for the elderly and residents with learning difficulties;
- the Council would look into building its own properties;
- the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities was ongoing and Councillors Clarke, Collins, Dixon and Matthews were taking a leading role in liaising with the Council's neighbouring authorities to ensure that the Plan took account of cross-border issues;
- all Members had been given the opportunity to be briefed on the draft Plan before consideration of it at the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive;
- there were areas that had been identified for future growth and an early review of the Plan would be undertaken, once the Government's proposals for infrastructure were known;
- green space was important to prevent coalescence; and
- neighbouring authorities were unable to cross the border and build in Central Bedfordshire.

The Leader of the Council explained the need for a planned approach to growth and for the Council to have control of the allocated sites and infrastructure.

Councillor Shingler requested that his vote against the recommendation be recorded in the minutes.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the draft Pre-Submission Local Plan be approved for the purposes of publication; 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 Local Plan prior to publication.**

Upon being put to the vote 46 Members voted in favour of the recommendation, 4 voted against the recommendation and 1 abstained from voting.

2) **Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19**

The Council considered a recommendation from the Executive meeting held on 5 December 2017 that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be extended for a further year, with no changes being proposed.

RESOLVED

that the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme be extended for a further year (2018/19) with no changes being proposed.

The decision was unanimous.

C/17/60 **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

C/17/61 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

Children's Services had won a national award for being the best employer of social workers in the country in a highly competitive field. Jason Sedgman, a Central Bedfordshire Social Worker was runner up for the award of best Social Worker of the year in recognition of his outstanding work with disabled children.

The Chairman had attended Award Ceremonies within some of the Directorates where she had an opportunity to meet employees.

C/17/62 **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader acknowledged the work that had gone into producing the Local Plan and thanked all those involved.

C/17/63 **Executive Member Presentations**

This item was withdrawn.

C/17/64 **Recommendations from the General Purposes Committee**

The Council considered recommendations from the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 December 2017 which sought approval of:

- the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19; and
- amendments to the procedures for dealing with motions at Council.

1) Pay Policy Statement

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19 be approved as set out at Appendix A to the report; and**
- 2. that the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19 be published on the Council's website.**

The decision was unanimous.

2) Proposed Amendments for Procedures for Motions

RESOLVED

that the proposed amendments to the procedures for dealing with motions at Council in that Rule 17 of Part 4A of the Constitution, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved to require proposals for amendments to motions to be provided in writing to the Monitoring Officer prior to a meeting of the Council for authorisation and that, on receiving such authorisation, the proposed amendment be circulated in writing to the meeting.

The decision was unanimous.

C/17/65

Calendar of Meetings

The Council considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2018/19.

The Traffic Management Meeting scheduled for the 11 September 2018 had been moved to 19 September 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

RESOLVED

that the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/19, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved as amended.

The decision was unanimous.

C/17/66

Change of Membership on Committees

This item was withdrawn.

C/17/67

Motions (if any)

A notice of motion was received from Councillor Stay and seconded by Councillor Collins:

“Fly-tipping blights the countryside of Central Bedfordshire; this illegal activity is not only an issue of significant concern to our residents, but a significant pressure on the resources of this Council.

Within the Ward of Caddington alone there were over 400 reports of fly-tipping in just one year.

Gathering the evidence to bring successful prosecutions against offenders is not an easy task & this Council wishes to congratulate the Environmental Protection Team within the Community Safety Directorate for their recent successes in gathering evidence which led to the conviction of Simon Wittle of Fletcher Way, Hemel Hempstead and Maxine Alborough of Regents St, Dunstable for fly-tipping in Caddington & Kensworth. A total of £6,420.00 was levied in fines along with the seizure of a vehicle

It is through the continued vigilance of residents in reporting incidents and the persistence of our Officers that successful prosecutions are made possible.”

RESOLVED

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The decision was unanimous.

C/17/68

Written Questions

No written questions were received.

C/17/69

Open Questions

The Chairman invited the Minority Group Leaders to ask a question, prior to the consideration of questions that had been placed in the Open Question receptacle. The Minority Group Leaders did not ask a question.

- (1) Councillor Mrs Goodchild asked if there would be Member engagement on the recommissioning of support services for children.

The Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing confirmed that a Members Reference Group was being formed and that she would be sending out meeting invitations to the relevant Members. Members would be able to follow the work of the Members Reference Group and if there was not sufficient information being provided she would look into other ways of keeping Members updated.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.45 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated