

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 26 April 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Chairman)

Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney	Cllrs	I Shingler
	R D Berry		Mrs C Hegley		P Smith
	D Bowater		P Hollick		B J Spurr
	A D Brown		J G Jamieson		R C Stay
	J Chatterley		K Janes		Mrs T Stock
	K M Collins		R W Johnstone		T Swain
	I Dalgarno		J Kane		G Tubb
	S Dixon		D J Lawrence		A M Turner
	Mrs A L Dodwell		Mrs J G Lawrence		M A G Versallion
	P Downing		Cllr M Liddiard		N Warren
	P A Duckett		K C Matthews		S Watkins
	K Ferguson		Ms C Maudlin		B Wells
	F Firth		D McVicar		R D Wenham
	E Ghent		G Perham		J N Young
	C C Gomm		A Ryan		A Zerny
	Mrs S A Goodchild		J A G Saunders		
	Ms A M W Graham		D Shelvey		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	M C Blair	Cllrs	N B Costin	Cllr	T Nicols
	Mrs S Clark		R Morris		

Absent

Cllr	J Freeman	Cllr	B Walker	Cllr	Woodward
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Officers:	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Mr M Coiffait	–	Director of Community Services
	Mr A Davie	–	Development Infrastructure Group Manager
	Mr D Galvin	–	Assistant Director of Finance
	Mrs S Hobbs	–	Senior Committee Services Officer
	Mr L Jones	–	Assistant Director for Education and Transformation
	Mr L Manning	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs J Ogle	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mr S Rix	–	Deputy Monitoring Officer
	Ms S Sherwood	–	Committee Services Officer

C/17/78 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

C/17/79 **Members' Interests**

Councillor Mrs Gurney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 10 'Central Bedfordshire Local Plan' due to her being a tenant of Manor Farm, Everton. She was absent from the Chamber during the item.

Councillor Jamieson declared an interest in item 11 'RAF Henlow Site as he knew some of the interested parties. He remained present for the item.

C/17/80 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

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

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

Mrs Peall, resident of Lidlington, was disappointed at the scale of proposed development for Lidlington. She suggested this should be reduced and other suitable sites could be developed, including brownfield land and sites at Aspley Guise and Marston Thrift. She felt this approach could deliver the same number of homes and cause less damage to the environment and to existing communities. She raised concerns about the impact of overdevelopment on the environment, wildlife, character of the village, increased traffic and coalescence. She also raised concerns about the proposed development by Covanta Energy at Rookery Pit as this would also bring additional noise and air pollution, making the area unattractive.

Ms Spearing, Chair of Ridgmont Parish Council, acknowledged the need to have a Local Plan and that the timetable for submitting the Local Plan to the Secretary of State had been driven by the Government as had the methodology for calculating the level of housing need. She felt that the Local Plan had not taken into account feedback from the public and that the Council had not engaged with the community. There had been a high number of objections as this had been the first opportunity for the public to raise issues with the proposed site allocations. The minor modifications paper had not included the objections from the community as these would be left for the Planning Inspector to consider. The proposed development would have an impact on infrastructure, the environment, agricultural land and the Greensand Ridge.

Ms Spearing felt that the Council had not assessed the landscape along Greensand Ridge, the preferred site at Marston Gate was not appropriate and the core principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework had not been followed. The residents of Ridgmont would be putting their objections to the Planning Inspector.

Mrs Pisano, resident of Tempsford, emphasised that the role of a councillor was to represent the views of local residents. The majority of people who had responded to the consultation on the Local Plan had objected and she felt that there had been a lack of transparency and communication. She stated that Tempsford was unsuitable for development due to the risk of flooding.

Mr Anderson, resident of Tempsford, explained that Tempsford had been identified as a location for future growth. He felt that this area should not be part of the Local Plan as it had not been included in the original draft of the Plan and it was not prominent within the second draft. The consultation on the site had not been adequate and there was no mention of the process for dealing with those sites identified for future growth and there was no technical evidence available. Tempsford was a high flood risk area and its potential development would cause serious risks to existing and new development. There would be a lack of open space, biodiversity and the loss of the historic site, RAF Tempsford. To keep this area as an identified location for future growth risked impacting on the character of the village and he was concerned about coalescence. He requested that the Council remove this area of Tempsford from the proposed Local Plan.

In response, the Executive Member for Regeneration:

- explained that the brownfield site, RAF Henlow, had been allocated for mixed use. Central Bedfordshire had a limited amount of brownfield sites as most had already been put to best use and fully developed;
- Members were being asked to authorise the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination. Having a Local Plan would mean that the Council retained control over where development would be located rather than it taking place in an ad hoc way;
- 6,300 representations had been received of which 73% had objected to the Plan proposals, 20% had commented and 7% had supported the proposed Local Plan. All responses received from the consultation would be submitted to the Planning Inspector;
- following the submission of the proposed Local Plan, a Planning Inspector would be appointed and a Public Examination would be held.
- if the Local Plan was approved by the Planning Inspector, developers would need to submit planning applications where issues such as landscaping would be addressed. As part of the planning application process, specific development proposals would be subject to public consultation before any decisions were made; and

- in the first version of the proposed Local Plan, Tempsford had been included as a site allocation and the Council had received a significant number of objections/comments from the residents in Tempsford. The proposed development of Tempsford relied on significant infrastructure and had been removed from the site allocation and included as a site for future growth.

Fluoridation

Mrs Bagchi highlighted the document produced by Public Health England entitled 'Water fluoridation: health monitoring report for England 2018'. She was concerned that the report had limitations as the total dose of fluoride absorbed by people had not been measured and felt that the report could not be taken seriously and she had no confidence in its findings.

Mr Hobbs explained that Everton was a fluoridated area. Fluoride was toxic, along with lead and arsenic, and was not fit for purpose. He explained the impact that this had on children's teeth and how it contributed to people with thyroid problems.

In response, the Executive Member for Public Health explained that Bedford Borough Council was carrying out a review into fluoridation and the results from this review would be considered by Central Bedfordshire Council. He had been advised that the water in Central Bedfordshire was safe.

Henlow Theatre

Ms Whittaker, representing Henlow Theatre, requested that the Council do not demolish it. The Theatre was a big part of the community and was based on the outskirts of the Camp. She invited Members of the Council to attend the next production to see that the theatre was worth saving.

The Leader of the Council referred to item 11 on the Agenda 'RAF Henlow Site' where the Council was being asked to support the exploration of options to transfer or purchase the site and the theatre would be part of this.

C/17/81

Petitions

No petitions were received.

C/17/82

Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman thanked Members for their support and wishes during her recent illness.

The Chairman had attended:

- the Houghton Regis Civic Service and acknowledge the work of the local ward Councillors; and
- the opening of the new tidy tip at Thorn Turn, Houghton Regis.

The following Central Bedfordshire businesses had been recognised in the 2018 Queens Award for Enterprise:

- Peli Bio Thermal, Leighton Buzzard
- FAI Automotive, Leighton Buzzard
- AC PLC, Marston Moretaine
- iCandy World Limited, Biggleswade.

C/17/83 Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader had no announcements to make.

C/17/84 Executive Member Presentations

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations provided an update on the activities taking place within her portfolio, including:

- Customer Services, residents were encouraged to use the Council's website for help and information, wherever possible;
- homelessness in Central Bedfordshire which was often due to evictions by private landlords. Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act the number enquiries had risen from 60 to 150;
- Adult Social Care had produced a leaflet about service demands, costs and how adult social care works;
- there was a briefing session scheduled for the 25 May on managing the demands of an aging population;
- Councillor Maudlin was now the Deputy Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations; and
- the Cheering Volunteering Awards Evening would take place on 5 June.

Councillor Dalgarno, Executive Member for Community Services gave a presentation on Greensands Ridge. Greensands Country was led by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and the Greensands Trust. They had received lottery funding to manage the project to promote Greensands Ridge and Central Bedfordshire Council was participating in this project. It was hoped that this would improve tourism in Central Bedfordshire. There would be events held between 26 May and 3 June to launch the project. The project was looking for volunteers to help run these events.

There were no questions from Members on the presentations.

C/17/85 **Recommendation from the Executive**

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 3 April 2018, seeking an increase in the capital budget for the Stratton Phase 5 project from £2.7m to £4.6m in 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the budget for the Stratton Phase 5 project be increased from £2.7m in the 2018/19 Capital Programme to £4.6m, as set out in paragraphs 54 and 55 in Appendix A to the Executive report.

The decision was unanimous.

C/17/86 **Central Bedfordshire Local Plan**

The Council considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that presented the submission version of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. The report sought approval to submit the draft Plan to the Secretary of State on 30 April 2018. The final submission draft had been prepared using a range of evidential work. Feedback from the consultation had been used to propose minor modifications to the Plan which would be submitted alongside all representations and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State.

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

- that the Council would have to use the Government's proposed methodology for determining the level of housing need if the Local Plan was not submitted. The housing need figure for Central Bedfordshire was 2,553 homes per annum based on the proposed methodology, representing a 60% increase on the Council's current objectively assessed need of 1600 homes per annum;
- that minor modifications had been proposed and were set out in the Agenda. The Planning Inspector would be able to make changes to the Local Plan following consideration of all the evidence submitted prior and during the Public Examination;
- Luton Borough Council had not confirmed that the duty to co-operate requirements had been met and Officers would be working with Luton to try to reach agreement; and
- there had been 1,365 objections received from residents in Barton-Le-Clay and reiterated that the Council would be forced to accommodate even more homes if it did not have a Local Plan in place.

RESOLVED to authorise the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination.

Upon being put to the vote 47 Members voted in favour and 3 Members voted against the resolution.

C/17/87 RAF Henlow Site

The Council considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that outlined the significant opportunity to regenerate the strategically important site at RAF Henlow. The report sought endorsement to explore options to transfer or purchase ownership of the RAF Henlow site from the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Regeneration explained it was part of a programme by the Government to release sites, primarily MOD sites. The proposal from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation was to build 2,700 houses. The Council felt that it would be appropriate for mixed use, including science, technology, space exploration and commercial developments.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources confirmed that Council were being asked to support the process in principle and any further developments would follow the normal governance process.

RESOLVED that the exploration of options to transfer or purchase the RAF Henlow Site be supported.

The decision was unanimous.

C/17/88 Motions

No motions were received.

C/17/89 Written Questions

No written questions were received.

C/17/90 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.

- (1) Councillor Zerny enquired whether the Council had any plans to introduce identification checks for voters at the local elections in May 2019.

The Leader of the Council explained that this was a Government driven scheme and was currently being piloted in different parts of the Country.

- (2) Councillor Ryan asked for an update on the proposals for the Kingsland Site, Houghton Regis.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that the approach to the regeneration of Houghton Regis was being considered. Proposals submitted by the Legacy organisation were being considered. He confirmed that the ward Members for Houghton Regis would be involved in any discussions.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.21 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated