

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 27 September 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Chairman)
Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	R D Berry M C Blair D Bowater J Chatterley Mrs S Clark K M Collins I Dalgarno S Dixon Mrs A L Dodwell P Downing P A Duckett K Ferguson Mrs J Freeman E Ghent	Cllrs	Mrs S A Goodchild Ms A M W Graham Ms C Hegley P Hollick J G Jamieson J Kane D J Lawrence Mrs J G Lawrence Cllr M Liddiard K C Matthews Ms C Maudlin D McVicar R Morris G Perham	Cllrs	I Shingler 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 T Woodward J N Young A Zerny
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Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker A D Brown N B Costin F Firth C C Gomm	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney K Janes R W Johnstone T Nicols A Ryan	Cllrs	D Shelves P Smith B J Spurr
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Absent

Cllr	J Saunders	Cllr	B Walker
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Officers:	Mr R Carr Mr M Coiffait Mr A Davie Mrs S Hobbs Mr L Manning Mrs J Ogley Mr S Rix Mrs C Shohet Mr C Warboys	- Chief Executive - Director of Community Services - Development Infrastructure Group Manager - Senior Committee Services Officer - Committee Services Officer - Director of Social Care, Health and Housing - Interim Monitoring Officer - Assistant Director of Public Health - Director of Resources
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C/18/27 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

C/18/28 **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

C/18/29 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

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

Houghton Regis North Site 1

Mr Sansom, Campaign to Protect Rural England Bedfordshire (CPRE), was concerned that there had been a delay in the building of new homes as part of Houghton Regis North 1 (HRN1) despite the opening of the A5-M1 Link Road and the Woodside Link. He requested a response to the questions contained in his letters to the Leader and that the issue of land banking at HRN1 be debated at a future Council meeting.

The Leader explained that the Council had not delayed the development at HRN1. The Council's role was to determine planning applications and it was the developer's role to determine when those houses were built. He sought CPRE's help in influencing Government to provide powers to local authorities to enable them to hold developers to account so that developments like HRN1 were not delayed.

Gypsy and Travellers

Mrs Dimmock, Village Focus Group, commented on the issues she had raised at the last Council meeting about the impact the gypsy and traveller sites on the local community. She felt that the Council was not addressing residents' concerns to help the settled community live harmoniously with the gypsy and traveller community. The Village Action Group was asking the Council to set up a Stakeholder Steering Committee to put in place strategies to help tackle the issues.

Mr Gibson, Village Focus Group, felt that the Council was being complacent when dealing with enforcing planning conditions and it was leaving Central Bedfordshire open to illegal gypsy and traveller encampments. He also requested that a Stakeholder Steering Committee be set up and that the Council enforce all breaches of planning.

Ms Sutton, Village Focus Group, also requested that the Council set up a Stakeholder Steering Committee to help resolve the problems that were taking place in the south of Central Bedfordshire due to the lack of enforcement. She requested that the Council use their funding and resources carefully to help alleviate the problems.

Mr Cotterel, Village Focus Group, was concerned that the Local Plan submitted to the Planning Inspector was deficient in relation to gypsy and travellers sites. He did not feel it was appropriate for the Council to rely on windfall sites and contended that sites should be fairly spread across Central Bedfordshire.

A member of the public who wished to remain anonymous raised concern about the education of children living on gypsy and traveller sites. She was concerned that if a caravan was unlicensed the children would go unnoticed.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged the strength of feeling and confirmed that the community's views were being taken seriously. The engagement with residents in Billington was working well and the Council would look to set up similar arrangements with the Village Action Group.

The Executive Member for Community Services confirmed that the Council was committed to strengthening its enforcement capacity to help tackle issues such as planning enforcement. He recognised the need for a coordinated approach and the Director of Community Services would bring forward proposals to ensure that the right mechanisms were put in place to address the Village Action Group's concerns.

The High Court had just granted the Council a two-year injunction that would prevent named individual gypsies and travellers from setting up unauthorised encampments in Central Bedfordshire. It would also stop any unauthorised encampments on specific parcels of land where it had proved harder to put in place preventative measures.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that there were gypsy and travellers' sites proposed in the draft Local Plan. Guidance from Government suggested that the Council's windfall policy was an appropriate strategy for gypsy and traveller pitches.

The Executive Member for Families, Education and Children explained that the Council took safeguarding children seriously and that he would provide a written response to the member of public concerned.

Local Plan

Ms Lawrence, referred to the submitted Local Plan and requested that Appendix 7, which stated that Tempsford had been identified as a location for future growth, be removed. She felt that the Council had focused on economic growth instead of housing need. She referred to the Central Area Growth Board and felt that this Board was not justified.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that the areas allocated for future growth would depend on infrastructure. During a refresh of the Local Plan these areas would be considered and it would be dependent on whether there was adequate infrastructure for these sites to come forward for development. The Council had to follow Government guidance and the objectively assessed need when producing the Local Plan.

The Government had sought strengthened arrangements for collaboration between councils and the Central Area Growth Board had been set up to act as the voice for the 17 local authorities within the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor. This would allow for strategic planning across the Corridor and access to financial support from the Government for the necessary infrastructure to bring forward additional homes.

C/18/30 Petitions

No petitions were received.

C/18/31 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had attended the opening of the extensions to Arnold Academy, Barton-le-Clay and Redbourne Upper School, Ampthill.

The Chairman had attended an award ceremony at BBC Three Counties Radio where she had had the opportunity to speak to volunteers and hear about their work.

She also had the opportunity to present certificates to the young people at the National Citizens Service.

C/18/32 Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader had attended a business engagement event in Woburn with local businesses.

C/18/33 Executive Member Presentations

Councillor Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children provided an update on the activities within his portfolio:

- Everton Heath Primary School had converted to an academy as part of a multi-agency trust, without the Council having to amend its decision that the responsibility of any unpaid teacher pension payments would be transferred to the trust;
- he congratulated the education providers and students for this year's GCSE and A level results. The results would be verified and circulated to Members;
- work on the Schools for the Future programme was progressing;

- the Council had received a grant of £170,000 from the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund and the Council would be working with schools to enhance children's health;
- the Council was recruiting in-house foster carers; and
- the Children in Care Council had produced a list of aspirations and he would be speaking to Members to help make their wishes come true. A representative of the Children in Care Council was co-chairing the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Councillor Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources provided an update on the progress made on the apprenticeship levy:

- the Council had taken a long term approach and had planned strategically to maximise the benefits to the organisation;
- the scheme was being used as a pipeline to help the Council to grow its own staff and also using the opportunity to upskill existing staff;
- an agile apprenticeship programme had been introduced where each apprentice would have several placements during their training to enable them to slot into full-time employment; and
- one of the Council's apprentices had been designated Apprentice of the Year by the Public Sector Managers' Association.

In response to a question, the Executive Member explained that the length of the apprenticeships depended on the course in question.

C/18/34

Recommendation from the Executive

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Executive held on 7 August 2018, proposing that Central Bedfordshire become a full member of the Central Area Growth Board.

RESOLVED

- 1. that Central Bedfordshire Council become a full member of the Central Area Growth Board by adopting the Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix A to the Executive report;**
- 2. that the creation of the Central Area Growth Board as a joint committee under section 101(5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant (where applicable) to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 be approved;**
- 3. that the additions to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix B to the Executive report, be approved; and**
- 4. that the Executive Member for Regeneration be appointed as the Council's representative on the Central Area Growth Board.**

Upon being put to the vote 43 Members voted in favour, 1 Member voted against and no Members abstained against the resolution.

C/18/35

Recommendations from General Purposes Committee

The Council considered recommendations from the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 23 August 2018.

a) Central Area Growth Board Terms of Reference

To seek approval to include the Central Area Growth Board and its Terms of Reference in the Constitution.

RESOLVED

that the Central Area Growth Board and its Terms of Reference, as set out at Appendices A and B to the report, be included in the Constitution.

b) Health and Wellbeing Board Membership

To seek approval to amend the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board and amend the Constitution accordingly.

RESOLVED

that the proposed changes to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in the report, be approved and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

Upon a) and b) being put to the vote 43 Members voted in favour, 1 Member voted against and no Members abstained against the resolution.

c) Consultation on the Community Governance Review

To seek approval of the final recommendations for each town and parish council within Central Bedfordshire and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to create any orders necessary for the implementation of those proposals which receive the support of Council.

In response to a question, the Chairman confirmed that the parish of Caddington would be referred to as Caddington and not Caddington, Hyde and Slip End.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the final recommendations for each town and parish council within Central Bedfordshire, as set out in the final recommendations (revised) at Appendix C to the General Purposes Committee minutes, be approved and adopted; and**

2. to authorise the Monitoring Officer to create any orders necessary for the implementation of those proposals which receive the support of Council (and any consequential matters thereby required).

The decision was unanimous.

C/18/36 **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2017/18**

Council considered a report that reviewed the Treasury Management activities for the year ending 31 March 2018.

RESOLVED

that the Treasury Management and the Prudential Indicators performance for the year ending 31 March 2018 be noted.

C/18/37 **Motions**

No motions were received.

C/18/38 **Written Questions**

No written questions were received.

C/18/39 **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 commented on Members' attendance during 2017/18.

The Leader confirmed that most Members in the Conservative Group had attended a high percentage of Council meetings.

Councillor Zerny asked a supplementary question regarding Councillor Walker's attendance and Register of Interest form.

The Leader did not have the formal authority to require any Member to resign.

- (2) In the absence of Cllr Ryan, Cllr Swain confirmed that the Labour Group did not have any questions to ask.
- (3) Councillor Mrs Goodchild commented on the roll out of Universal Credit and asked how the Council was supporting organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Disability Resources Centre.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that as well as supporting individual claimants the Council also supported the CAB by providing them with detailed guidance. As Universal Credit was rolled out the Council would monitor and seek to respond appropriately to cases of financial hardship.

- (4) Councillor Maudlin asked if residents in Sandy would be consulted on proposals affecting sports facilities in the area.

The Executive Member for Community Services explained that leisure services in Sandy needed to be put on a more sustainable footing. The public would be consulted on what and how the Council might provide leisure services in the area.

- (5) Councillor Stock asked what leisure facilities would remain in Sandy following the consultation?

The Executive Member for Community Services confirmed that the gym and the athletics track would remain and the school had offered to continue with the netball club. All other facilities would be included as part of the consultation.

- (6) Councillor Stock asked whether there was a link between Sandye Place Academy closing and the possible withdrawal of leisure facilities at the secondary school in Sandy.

The Executive Member for Families, Education and Children confirmed that there was no link between these two issues. He explained that Sandy Place Academy was held by the Department for Education (DfE) on a 125 year lease. The Council was in discussion with the DfE to release the site to enable the Council to start consulting residents on its future.

- (7) Councillor Maudlin asked if the facilities at Sandye Place Academy would remain open after September 2019 and were there any plans for the site?

The Executive Member for Families, Education and Children confirmed that nothing would take place with the site until the Department for Education had released it. He acknowledged that the site was critical to the town centre. Once the Council was in a position to consider the site's future, residents would be consulted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.15 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated