

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 29 March 2018

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs J G Lawrence (Chairman)
Cllr G Perham (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE
J G Jamieson
K C Matthews

Cllrs B J Spurr
N Warren
R D Wenham
A Zerny

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone
S Watkins

Substitutes: Cllr D Lawrence for S Watkins

Members in Attendance: Cllr K M Collins

Officers in Attendance: Mrs V Chapman – Assistant Director People
Ms M Damigos – Corporate Lawyer
Mr B Dunleavy – Democratic Services Manager
Mrs S Hobbs – Senior Committee Services Officer
Mrs C Jagusz – Committee Services Administrator

GPC/17/34. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 7 December 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

GPC/17/35. **Members' Interests**

Item 7 - Community Governance Review

It was noted that a number of members of the committee were also a member of a town or parish council.

GPC/17/36. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had no announcements or communication.

GPC/17/37. Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

GPC/17/38. Questions, Statements or Deputations

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

GPC/17/39. Community Governance Review

The Committee considered a report that set out the draft recommendations in relation to the Community Governance Review for Central Bedfordshire. The outcome of the submissions to the stage 1 consultation, including the review of parish and parish ward boundaries and the consequential changes to electoral arrangements, were attached to the report.

The committee considered the draft recommendations and in particular considered the following areas:

- Ampthill – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Biggleswade – redraw the boundary to encompass the built up area to include Sainsbury's, the tidy tip and the flats.
- Blunham – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Caddington – redraw the boundary to include the Holiday Inn Hotel.
- Clifton – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Cranfield – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Dunstable – recommendation 2.5 'that the view of the Sewell residents be considered before a final decision is taken on the proposal to incorporate the hamlet into the parish of Dunstable' be removed. The boundary change for Portland Ride be redrawn to include the houses in Houghton Regis, but the playing field to remain in Dunstable.
- Henlow – the draft recommendations were approved. It was noted that the number of the electorate in the Camp ward was low due to a number of unoccupied properties.
- Houghton Conquest – the draft recommendation were approved.

- Houghton Regis – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Leighton-Linslade – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Marston Moretaine – the draft recommendations were approved. It was noted that if the parish name was to be changed to Marston Moreteyne it would be expected that the parish council cover the cost of changing signs etc.
- Moggerhanger – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Sandy – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Southill – the draft recommendations were approved.
- Totternhoe – the draft recommendation were approved.
- Westoning – the draft recommendations were approved.

The draft recommendations would go forward to stage 3 for further consultation with stakeholders, interested parties and residents. This would take place between the 14 May 2018 and 6 July 2018. Any submissions submitted during this stage would be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 23 August 2018.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the publication of the Draft Recommendations as set out in Appendix A, as amended above, be approved for consultation with interested parties, stakeholders and residents.**

GPC/17/40. Gender Pay Gap Statement - 31 March 2017

The Committee considered a report that set out the details of the Central Bedfordshire Council's Gender Pay Gap that was due to be published by 30 March 2018. It was noted that the gender pay gap was different to equal pay and the Committee requested that this was highlighted when publishing it to the Council's website.

NOTED

- 1. the contents of the report and appendix.**

GPC/17/41. Update Report on the Recording of Meetings

The Committee received a verbal update setting out the latest position regarding the recording of meetings at the Council.

The contract with Public-I had been extended for a further year until February 2019 to allow the continuation of live streaming of meetings and the opportunity to include additional meetings at an extra cost.

Currently, the Development Management Committee, Council, the Executive and all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees were webcast. The Committee gave consideration to which additional meetings it thought should also be webcast. It was suggested that the Traffic Management Meeting should be webcast but it was noted that this meeting was often held at alternative venues which may not have the facility to webcast. It was agreed to consult the Executive Member for Community Services for his views.

It was considered to be beneficial for Audit Committee meetings to be webcast to enable greater transparency. It was agreed that this would be considered for inclusion in the list of Committees currently being webcast.

A suggestion was also made for the Beds Police and Crime Panel and the Beds Fire and Rescue Authority to be included but, in line with Bedford Borough Council, with only the audio being recorded. It was noted that this would incur additional cost and significant change to the current service.

The Committee were asked to consider if they would like historic webcasts to be made available online at an additional cost of around £7k. Currently the Council's website displays the last six months for viewing but have received enquiries in the past to view older webcasts via Freedom of Information requests. The Committee agreed to include these historic webcasts at the additional cost.

It was noted that in providing more detailed minutes for the Development Management Committee, there was increased pressure on resources and it was asked if webcast meetings could return to a more succinct form of minutes. It was agreed that those committees webcast could return to this form of minute but that Development Management Committee was a special case and would continue to be webcast alongside the provision of detailed minutes, but they would not need to include names or reference to who made what statement.

The Committee was advised of a possible move towards webcast meetings having only one officer present to clerk the meeting and also run the webcast. Currently there were cost implications due to all webcast meetings currently having two officers present (one to clerk the meeting and one to run the webcast). The Committee considered the implications such as Members arriving late and having to be logged in to speak. The suggestion was made that Members receive additional training to be able to log on to the microphones themselves.

The Committee also discussed the implications for this with regards to managing speakers. It was noted that Council and the Development Management Committee would continue to have two officers in attendance and that other webcast meetings would trial using only one officer.

It was also suggested that a wide angle shot of the Council Chamber be used instead of microphones cutting to each Member throughout the meeting which would remove the use of ID cards. It was noted that this could lead to confusion as to who was speaking, and the Committee decided not to support this proposal.

RESOLVED

- 1. to webcast Audit Committee meetings and to consult the Executive Member for Community Services with a view to webcasting Traffic Management Meetings;**
- 2. that historic webcast be made available on the website;**
- 3. that the minutes of webcast meetings be succinct with the exception of Development Management Committee which would be detailed, but not include names or reference to who made what statement;**
- 4. that webcast meetings would only have one officer in attendance with the exception of Council and Development Management Committee whereby two officers would be required; and**
- 5. that webcasts would not adopt the fixed wide shot of the Council Chamber but continue to use the microphones and ID cards as currently in place.**

GPC/17/42. Report on the Arrangements for Ethical Standards

The Committee considered a report that provided a summary of the Council's ethical governance and arrangements since October 2017.

Member training took place in January 2018 on the Code of Conduct and was well attended. Any queries that were raised at this training session would be followed up and a response circulated to Members.

Full Council had approved the amendment to the Constitution in relation to complaints being made under the Councillor Code of Conduct being published. The Committee confirmed that all complaints received should be published on the website.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Council had complied with its obligations in respect of ethical standards under the Localism Act 2011 for the 6 months since March 2017; and**
- 2. that 'no case to answer' complaints would be published anonymously.**

GPC/17/43. **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the work programme and noted that if there were no additional items for the meeting scheduled for the 21 June 2018 then this meeting would be cancelled and the Market Rate Supplement Payments – Annual Update would be rescheduled for 23 August 2018.

NOTED

the General Purposes Committee Work Programme.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.20 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated