

## COUNCIL MEETING – 24 JUNE 2010

### Recommendations to Council from the Executive meeting held on 8 June 2010

#### 4. Minute No E/10/18 – Community Engagement Strategy

The Executive considered a report from Councillor Richard Stay, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance proposing the final draft of the Community Engagement Strategy and delivery plan. The aim of the strategy was to deliver greater added value to citizens by understanding their needs and issues, providing a greater involvement in the decision-making process and access to public sector services.

**(NOTE: A copy of the report had been circulated with the Executive agenda to all Councillors.)**

The report outlined how the Strategy had been developed by Central Bedfordshire Together (the Local Strategic Partnership – “LSP”) in discussions with Local Authority officers, Ward Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and partner organisations. Following formal consultation on the Strategy a three year delivery plan had been developed. It was noted that each of the main concerns and issues identified through the consultation process had been taken into consideration. Members were advised that significant progress had already been made in implementing a number of key elements of the delivery plan, as outlined in the submitted report.

The Portfolio Holder drew Members’ attention to the five key principles of the Strategy which, following consultation with partner organisations and staff, had been agreed as:

1. Giving more people more opportunities to influence decisions;
2. Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities;
3. Enhancing the role of Town and Parish Councils;
4. Building the capacity of local people to engage; and
5. Ensuring a strategic and joined-up, co-ordinated partnership approach.

Councillor Stay explained that the Strategy would enable the Council to establish new relationships with individuals and organisations and help communities understand the tough choices and decisions that would have to be made because of the current economic climate. The Strategy would also be used to manage expectations about service levels and the way some services would need to be provided by the public sector in the future. The Strategy also supported the Government’s plans to enable citizens, communities and local government to come together to solve problems and improve their localities.

During the ensuing general discussion, Members discussed the key principle of enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities. Responding to comments about the merit or otherwise of providing each

Councillor with small individual budgets to spend locally in their wards, Councillor Stay explained that this element of the Strategy would enable each Member to have an influence over local expenditure based on community requests, thus enhancing their leadership role in the community. Given that this element of the procedure would have to be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process, the Portfolio Holder moved the following amendment to his recommendation which was duly seconded:-

‘that an additional sentence be added to the second of the five key principles for a successful Community Strategy titled ‘Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities’, detailed at bullet point two on page 61 of the submitted report, to make explicit that providing each Councillor with a budget to spend locally in their wards would be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process.’

Reason for decision: To enable the Local Authority and its partners to deliver greater added value to our citizens by understanding their needs and issues, and giving them a greater involvement in the decision-making process and access to public sector services. The strategy and delivery plan are based on developing a joined-up, strategic and co-ordinated partnership approach, which is consistent with our aspirations for Total Place.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that an additional sentence be added to the second of the five key principles for a successful Community Strategy titled ‘Enabling Ward Councillors to be leaders in and for their communities’, detailed at bullet point two on page 61 of the submitted report, to make explicit that providing each Councillor with a budget to spend locally in their wards would be considered alongside all other budget proposals as part of the normal annual budget process.**

#### ***RECOMMENDED to Council***

***that the Community Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2013 and its proposed delivery plan, as amended in resolution 1 above and attached as Appendices A & B to the submitted report, be adopted, with the Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement working thereafter with directorates and partners to implement the Strategy.***

**[Please note that the Central Bedfordshire Together Board on the 13 May 2010 endorsed the final draft of the Community Engagement Strategy for final approval by Council on 24 June 2010.]**

**[Please note that a copy of the original report can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Council web site at the following link:  
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=15203> ]**