

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 11 January 2011.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs P E Turner MBE (Chairman)

Cllr R C Stay (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs R J Drinkwater
Mrs C Hegley
M R Jones
Mrs A M Lewis
S F Male

Cllrs K C Matthews
D McVicar
T Nicols
Mrs C Turner
B Wells

Members in Attendance:

Cllrs P N Aldis
R A Baker
Mrs A Barker
A R Bastable
P A Blaine
D Bowater
Dr R Egan
Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms A M W Graham
T Green
J G Jamieson

Cllrs D Jones
P Rawcliffe
A Shadbolt
P Snelling
Miss A Sparrow
B J Spurr
J Street
A M Turner
P Williams
J N Young

Officers in Attendance

Mr G Alderson	Director of Sustainable Communities
Mr J Atkinson	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Mr M Bowmer	Assistant Director, Financial Services/Chief Finance Officer
Mr R Carr	Chief Executive
Mr R Ellis	Director of Customer and Shared Services
Mrs E Grant	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Mrs S Hobbs	Committee Services Officer
Ms D Lester	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mrs J Ogle	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Mr J Unsworth	Interim Assistant Director of Finance

E/10/110 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:-

- **Members in Attendance – add Councillor Mrs Goodchild as present.**

E/10/111 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

Non-Executive Member Councillor Dr Egan declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 12 'Luton and Southern Central Bedfordshire Local Development Framework: Core Strategy – Pre Submission' as she lived in an area that was detailed in the Core Strategy as being of significant importance.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

Non-Executive Member Councillor Dr Egan declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in agenda item 9 'Statutory Review of Fees and Charges' as a recipient of the Careline Response Service.

E/10/112 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised Members that the meeting of the Executive scheduled for 8 February 2011 was being deferred to the 15 February 2011 to enable full account to be taken of recommendations received from Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the public and stakeholders.

E/10/113 **Petitions**

In accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Executive received the following petitions:-

1. Save LuDun Industries

The Monitoring Officer advised the meeting that an e-petition and paper petition had been received in support of LuDun Industries and which urged the Council not to close the facility.

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Executive would consider the views of the petitioners when it came to finalise its 2011/12 Budget proposals for presentation to Council on 24 February 2011.

2. Stop the removal of School Crossing Patrol in Maulden

Councillor Mrs Barker presented a petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, against the removal of school crossing patrols in Maulden.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Barker for introducing the petition and explained that it, alongside others, would be considered as part of the finalisation of the Budget for 2011/12.

3. Stop the removal of School Crossing Patrol in Harlington

Mr Brundle presented a petition protesting against the withdrawal of the school crossing patrol from the Harlington Crossroads. Parents in the area were concerned that there was poor visibility at the crossing making this junction unsafe for pedestrians. Mr Brundle welcomed the traffic calming measures the Council had put in place outside Harlington Lower School.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles thanked Mr Brundle for the petition and explained the process for its consideration.

4. Opposition to the Closure of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre

Ms Hudgell presented a petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, opposing the closure of Houghton Regis Leisure Centre. The paper petition contained in excess of 1,300 signatures and the e-petition contained 268 signatures. Ms Hudgell explained that the Leisure Centre was fully utilised by the local community and sports clubs. She also commented that if the Leisure Centre was to close, the specialist sports clubs would also have to close.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hudgell for introducing the petition and explained that as the number of signatories had exceeded the 1,250 threshold for consideration by Council, the petition would be submitted to the 20 January 2011 Council meeting for debate.

The petitioners were advised that the Executive had not yet decided whether to include any of the savings proposals to which the petitions related in the budget for 2011/12 which would be presented to Council on 24 February 2011. The proposals, in the meantime, would be considered alongside efficiency savings and other service reconfiguration and reduction proposals to decide what should be included in the Executive's recommendations to Council. During the process, the Executive would take note of the representations made in the petitions received. A definitive response to the requests made in the petitions could not be given but the lead petitioners would be advised in due course what the Executive planned to do.

E/10/114 **Public Participation**

There were no questions received in accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation.

E/10/115 **Draft Budget (Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12 to 2013/14)**

The Executive considered a report from Councillor Maurice Jones, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People setting out the draft budget proposals for 2011/12 to 2013/14, based on the most up to date information on the Council's future resources. The Portfolio Holder advised the meeting that the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2011/12 would not be finalised until after the 16 January 2011.

Councillor Jones explained that when the Executive meets on 15 February 2011 it must finalise its budget proposals for consideration by the Council on 24 February 2011. These proposals would need to take into account any recommendations that come forward from Overview and Scrutiny, feedback from members of the public and other stakeholders. For this reason, the Portfolio Holder proposed that the closing date for representations should be confirmed as 25 January 2011 in order to ensure that feedback was collated and presented within the report to the Executive on 15 February. Members noted that this would include any e-petitions that related to the budget setting process.

Reason for decision: To enable consultation to take place on the draft budget proposals for 2011/12.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the budget proposals for 2011/12, as set out in the submitted draft report and appendices, be approved as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties.**
- 2. that the Executive acknowledges that, in order that it can finalise its budget proposals on 15 February 2011, taking account of any recommendations received from Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the public and stakeholders, the closing date to receive representations on the proposed budget would be 25 January 2011.**

E/10/116 **Capital Programme Review**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for People, Finance and Governance which proposed a revised Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2014/15 for consultation.

Members noted that replacement narrative under options 1 and 2 of the Highways Structural Maintenance Block (R). In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Healthier Lifestyles explained that the grants received for Highways had now been halved.

The Portfolio Holder for People, Finance and Governance moved an additional recommendation in relation to the Flitwick Leisure Centre, covering the retention of the facility and the need for further work from officers, which was duly seconded.

Reason for decision: To reduce the Authority's new borrowing requirement in line with the request by Council in February 2010.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the 2011/12 to 2014/15 Capital Programme as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with Overview & Scrutiny and other stakeholders.**
- 2. that the Executive note the level of additional borrowing associated with the draft 2011/12 Capital Programme had been reduced to £8.600M to minimise the impact on the Council's future Revenue Budgets.**
- 3. that the leisure facility in Flitwick be retained and Officers be requested to come forward with proposals for:**
 - (a) a leisure strategy;**
 - (b) options for the maintenance of existing facility; and**
 - (c) options for phasing the re-provision of a leisure facility within the current financial envelope.**
- 4. that the 2011/12 to 2014/15 Capital Programme – Housing Revenue Account, as outlined in the submitted report, be approved for consultation with Overview & Scrutiny and other stakeholders.**
- 5. that the Executive acknowledges that, in order that it can finalise its budget proposals on 15 February 2011 taking account of any recommendations received from Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the public and stakeholders, that the closing date to receive representations on the proposed budget would be 25 January 2011.**

E/10/117

Statutory Review of Fees and Charges

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and People proposing revised fees and charges to take effect from 1 April 2011.

The report noted that new or enhanced charges as a result of the Revenue Income Optimisation 'Case for Change' report might be recommended, following consideration through the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that a Car Parking Charges Task Force had been established by Overview and Scrutiny. The Portfolio Holder moved the following revised recommendations, which were duly seconded:

- a) that the schedule of Fees and Charges for 2011/12 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties.
- b) notes the business cases from the Revenue Income Optimisation Project will be considered by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny process referred to in paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- c) the Executive acknowledges in order that it can finalise its budget proposals on 15 February 2011 taking account of any recommendations received from Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the public and stakeholders, that the closing date to receive representations on the proposed budget will be 25 January 2011."

During the debate the Portfolio Holder responded to comments and questions raised by non-Executive Members in attendance.

Reason for decision: To enable the schedule of Fees and Charges for 2011/12 to be set following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the schedule of Fees and Charges for 2011/12 as set out in Appendix A to the submitted report, be approved as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other interested parties.**
- 2. that the Executive notes the business cases from the Revenue Income Optimisation Project to be considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred to in paragraph 4.3 of the submitted report.**
- 3. that the Executive acknowledges that, in order that it can finalise its budget proposals on 15 February 2011 taking account of any recommendations received from Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the public and stakeholders, that the closing date to receive representations on the proposed budget would be 25 January 2011.**

E/10/118 **Treasury Management Strategy**

The Executive considered a report from Councillor Maurice Jones, Portfolio Holder for People, Finance and Governance proposing a revised Treasury Management Strategy in response to changes in two key Codes and increased risk in investment markets.

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the recommendation from the Customer and Central Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 13 December 2010 'that the Executive continues to minimise investments commensurate with risk in order to maximise the savings that would be realised by such action'.

He explained that this suggestion was followed in practice but he would seek advice on whether the Strategy needed to be amended, before being approved by Council on 24 February 2011. The Treasury Management Strategy had been produced in line with the revised, autumn 2009, CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Reason for decisions: To ensure the Council had an appropriate treasury management framework.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that the Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy, as attached to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.

E/10/119 **Local Development Framework (South): Gypsy and Traveller provision**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development which outlined the background and current situation regarding Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitch provision. The report concluded with a recommended scale of pitch requirement for the southern part of Central Bedfordshire.

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the recommendation from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 14 December 2010 and moved that these recommendations be supported.

Reason for decision: To enable the Executive to consider the issues relating to the scale of Gypsy and Traveller provision in the south of Central Bedfordshire and agree a way forward.

RESOLVED

- 1. that 37 gypsy and traveller pitches be allocated in the southern part of Central Bedfordshire to the end of 2010 and a further 18 pitches be allocated from the beginning of 2011 to the end of 2015, making a total of 55 pitches. 32 pitches have existing permissions leaving 23 pitches still to be provided.**
- 2. that 5 pitches for travelling Showpeople be allocated in the southern part of Central Bedfordshire between 2006 and 2011 and a further 3 pitches between 2011 and 2021.**
- 3. that the Council work with the established gypsy and traveller community to discuss the incorporation of transit pitches within existing or proposed sites.**

E/10/120

**Luton and Southern Central Bedfordshire Local Development Framework :
Core Strategy - Pre Submission**

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development regarding the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy for Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire.

A concern was raised from a non-Executive Member about the design of housing estates, but such design issues were appropriately considered during the planning application process following in the context of Central Bedfordshire Council's design guide. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development noted the concerns regarding the development proposals for the east of Leighton Buzzard and advised Members that a Transport Study was underway to enable the results to be embedded in the Core Strategy. The Portfolio Holder agreed to provide a written response to the relevant non-Executive Member who had raised a query about the ownership of land.

Members acknowledged the recommendation from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee from their meeting on 14 December 2010 strongly supporting the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy.

Members noted that the publication of the Core Strategy concluded on 14 January 2011 and representations received would be considered and submitted alongside the Core Strategy to the Inspector, as part of the formal Examination process.

Reason for decision: To formally endorse the Council's representation of support of the Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy Pre-Submission.

RESOLVED

that the Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Joint Core Strategy Pre-Submission Document, as outlined in the submitted report, which was based on assessment of local need is strongly supported and endorsed.

E/10/121

Annual Assessment of Children's Services 2010

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services which presented the 2010 annual performance rating for Central Bedfordshire Children's Services. Ofsted had assessed children's services in Central Bedfordshire Council as performing adequately. Ofsted had highlighted the good progress that had been made in establishing strategic partnerships and identifying the right priorities to improve outcomes for all children, young people and their families.

The Executive had approved the Education Vision in March 2010 which underpinned the approach to school improvement throughout Central Bedfordshire. The School Improvement Strategy had been revised to provide a differentiated model for allocating support to schools.

Tribute was paid to the Director and her team for the improvements reflected in the Ofsted report.

Reason for decision: To enable the Executive to consider formally the performance assessment and to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty as set out in the Children Act 2004 to improve outcomes for children and young people.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the 2010 annual performance rating for Central Bedfordshire Children's Services, be noted.**
- 2. that the action to be taken to improve future outcomes, as detailed in the submitted report, be approved.**

E/10/122

The Future of Special Schooling in the South of Central Bedfordshire - Proposal to publish Statutory Notices to discontinue the Dyslexia Provision at Priory Middle School

The Executive considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services which outlined the informal consultation process that needed to occur in advance of statutory notices on the future of special schooling in the south of Central Bedfordshire. The report also set out proposals to publish statutory notices to discontinue the dyslexia provision at Priory Middle School, Dunstable.

Reason for decision: To initiate the required consultation process.

RESOLVED

- 1. that consultation commence on the preferred option for the delivery of Area Special Schooling in Dunstable/Houghton Regis, that being to merge Glenwood, Hillcrest and Weatherfield Schools either through the closure of two and the prescribed alteration of one across all three sites initially or the closure of three schools and the opening of one new school across three or two sites.**

2. **that, subject to the outcome of the consultation, a recommendation be put to a future meeting of the Executive for statutory publication of the proposed merger.**
3. **that statutory consultation commence on the discontinuation of the dyslexia provision at Priory Middle School.**

E/10/123

Response from Overview and Scrutiny to the Supplementary Savings Proposals contained in the Corporate Budget Strategy

The Executive noted the report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees which set out comments made during their examination of the supplementary savings proposals outlined in the Executive's Corporate Budget Strategy update dated 7 December 2010.

The Portfolio Holder for People, Finance and Governance acknowledged that the minutes from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 November 2010 would be reported to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To enable the Executive to take account of the comments and recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny before it makes a final recommendation to Council regarding the supplementary savings proposals outlined within its Corporate Budget Strategy report.

RESOLVED

that the recommendations from the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Committees regarding the supplementary savings proposals contained with the Corporate Budget Strategy Update, be considered as part of the Executive's budget setting process.

E/10/124

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 January to 31 December 2011 was received.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.22 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated