

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 21 July 2011.

### PRESENT

Cllr P Hollick (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs R B Gammons (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney	Cllrs	N J Sheppard
	R D Berry		Mrs C Hegley		I Shingler
	L Birt		D J Hopkin		M A Smith
	M C Blair		J G Jamieson		Miss A Sparrow
	D Bowater		D Jones		B J Spurr
	A D Brown		M R Jones		A M Turner
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		I A MacKilligan		Mrs P E Turner MBE
	Mrs S Clark		K C Matthews		M A G Versallion
	J A E Clarke		Ms C Maudlin		P F Vickers
	N B Costin		D McVicar		N Warren
	I Dalgarno		J Murray		B Wells
	A L Dodwell		Mrs M Mustoe		R D Wenham
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		T Nicols		P Williams
	P A Duckett		R B Pepworth		J N Young
	Mrs S A Goodchild		B Saunders		A Zerny
	Mrs D B Green		J A G Saunders		

### Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	C C Gomm	Cllrs	Mrs J G Lawrence
	A R Bastable		K Janes		A Shadbolt
	Dr R Egan		D J Lawrence		R C Stay

In Attendance: –

Officers:	Mr J Atkinson	–	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Miss H Bell	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Ms D Clarke	–	Interim Assistant Chief Executive (People & Organisation)
	Mr A Fleming	–	Acting Director of Sustainable Communities
	Mrs E Grant	–	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Mrs J Ogley	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Ms M Peaston	–	Committee Services Manager
	Mr C Warboys	–	Chief Finance Officer

C/11/16 **Prayers**

Prayers were taken by Reverend Hathaway.

C/11/17 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

C/11/18 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:**

There were no declarations made.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial interests :**

There were no declarations made.

C/11/19 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman reported the recent death of Gordon Colling, former Leader of the Labour Group on Bedfordshire County Council and Deputy Mayor of Kempston Town Council. The Council stood in silent tribute to his memory.

The Chairman asked Councillors to contact their respective Town and Parish Councillors to engage them in helping to fill School Governor vacancies.

The Chairman reported that the quality of construction and design in Central Bedfordshire had been celebrated in regional local authority Building Control awards with local projects achieving success in four categories. The Council's Building Control team had supported the projects at every stage from design to construction.

The Chairman also reported that:-

- together with Peter Smith, Chairman of the Greensand Trust, he had formally opened Rushmere Park, Leighton Buzzard
- Council appointments had now been made to participating local organisations
- he was pleased to commend the newly relaunched music service.

C/11/20 **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

The Leader had no announcements nor any matters of communication.

C/11/21 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

Questions and statement were put by a member of the public under the Public Participation provisions set out at Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

- (a) Mr Clarke asked whether the Independent Remuneration Panel had met to discuss the creation of a Special Responsibility Allowance for Executive Members without portfolios and what the views of the Panel were on the recent 2% reduction in Councillor allowances.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that an Independent Remuneration Panel meeting was scheduled to take place shortly.

- (b) Mr Clarke asked what contingency plans the Council had in place for dealing with illegal traveller encampments and referred to current events in Stotfold.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning & Economic Development responded that he was aware of recent problems in Stotfold and advised that a protocol was currently being developed. A written answer would be provided to Mr Clarke.

- (c) Mr Clarke requested an explanation of payments made to two organisations, Deloittes and Mitie Plc, in which the Executive Member for External Affairs had registered an interest.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources replied that he would provide Mr Clarke with a written response.

C/11/22 **Petitions**

In accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution, the Council received notification of the following petition:

**Save our Children's Music in Central Beds Schools**

Councillor Zerny presented a petition which contained 400 signatures. He commented that he was aware of the relaunch of the music service but that the petition was a reflection of how much people cared about music in schools.

In response, the Executive Member for Children's Services commented on the benefits of the newly relaunched music service.

C/11/23 **Recommendations from Executive**

**Luton and Southern Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy – Memorandum of Understanding with Luton Borough Council on continued Joint Working.**

The Council considered the recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 12 July 2011.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the current position in respect of the Core Strategy as outlined in the report submitted to the Executive on 12 July 2011, and the terms of the draft Memorandum of Understanding, in order to facilitate continued joint working between Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council;**
- (2) that the Chief Executive be authorised, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding following further discussions with Luton Borough Council.**

C/11/24 **Report of the Police Authority**

A report of the Bedfordshire Police Authority held on 20 May 2011 was submitted.

Councillor Hollick, representative on the Police Authority, advised that further to difficulties in appointing Luton Borough Council representation to the Bedfordshire Police Authority, that Council had nominated two Labour and one Independent candidate(s) and the outcome was awaited. This would meet the criteria set for appointments across the Police Authority's area.

**RESOLVED**

**that the report of the Bedfordshire Police Authority be noted.**

C/11/25 **Report of the Fire Authority**

A report from the meeting of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority held on 8 June 2011 was submitted.

Councillor McVicar advised that he had been appointed as the representative on the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority and would present future reports to Council.

**RESOLVED**

**that the report of the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority meeting held on 8 June 2011 be noted.**

C/11/26

### **Written Questions**

A written question had been submitted under Rule 12.2 by Councillor Zerny, as follows:

Charities are currently being charged £150 for road closures when the true cost of advertising them in the paper is as low as £85. Is it really justifiable for a public service to levy such a high administration fee?

The following reply was received:

The charge is based upon the average cost of placing adverts in local papers. However, the cost of an advert varies from paper to paper and depends on the size of the advert.

The size of the advert depends on how complex the closure and diversion route is.

The true cost to the Council of processing a traffic order is in excess of £1000, which is reflected in our standard fees for such work. This covers the cost of officer time to:

- undertake liaison meetings with other bodies where appropriate
- analyse the closure to determine the appropriate diversion routes
- design the diversion route with the appropriate signage
- check there is no conflict with other diversions on the network
- book the road space
- write the order
- check the draft with the newspaper.

Unlike commercial enterprises, charities are required to pay only £150, representing a fraction of the true cost incurred by the Council.

C/11/27

### **Open Questions**

The Chairman presided over Open Questions asked of Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members under Procedure rule 12.7.

1. Councillor Murray asked about employment issues at LuDun and whether any help was being provided to disabled employees to find employment.

The Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing advised that a LuDun employee had secured employment through the redeployment pool.

2. Councillor Mrs Chapman asked for an update on the position regarding Flitwick Town Centre Development.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development indicated that he would provide a written reply.

3. Councillor Aldis asked when the vehicle that would enable local residents in a particular area to use re-usable bags for garden waste would be introduced.

The Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities advised that the vehicle was due to be in use the week commencing 14 November 2011.

4. Councillor Smith asked a question about claims of staff bullying and harassment as referred to in recent press publications.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that he was satisfied that policies and procedures to prevent bullying were in place.

5. Councillor Murray asked whether it was fair to move employees' bases of work during the extensive restructuring process.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that a scheme for compensation payments was in place where staff were required to travel longer distances due to a change in their main place of work.

6. Councillor Bowater asked the Council to joint him in commending the Finance team who had worked hard to be the first Council in the East of England this year to complete and submit the end of year accounts.

7. Councillor Smith asked a question in relation to the provision of mobile phones for Council employees and Councillors.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that a review of the provision of mobile phones to staff had been undertaken and that the Executive would soon be considering a report reviewing Councillors' ICT allowances.

8. Councillor Aldis asked why the Mayor of Sandy had not received a response to a petition presented to Council in February 2010 and when a reply might be provided.

The Leader of the Council assured Councillor Aldis that he would follow up Councillor Aldis's query.

9. Councillor Zerny asked how council tax payers could be certain that there had been no irregularity in the process of an order given to Deloitte and Mitie to a value of £25,000, as the Executive Member for External Affairs had a registered interest in connection with that company.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that all appropriate procedures had taken place and undertook to look into this matter.

10. Councillor Murray commented on the increasing proportion of Academies locally and asked what the Executive Member for Children's Services was doing to prevent deterioration in schools' performance.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that schools in Central Bedfordshire were already of a good standard and were continually improving. Reference was made to the fact that some schools in Central Bedfordshire had been praised by Ofsted.

C/11/28 **Motions (if any)**

No motions had been received from Members of the Council under Procedure Rule No 16.

C/11/29 **Changes to Membership of Committees**

The Council considered a report of the Monitoring Officer outlining changes to the membership of Committees since the last meeting of Council and seeking an appointment to the vacant position of Vice-Chairman of Customer and Central Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix A to the report, setting out changes in the membership of Committees since the last meeting, was tabled at the meeting.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that changes to the membership of Committees be noted;**
- (2) that Councillor Mrs Ann Sparrow be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Customer and Central Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

NOTE: An updated schedule of committee membership is attached to these minutes.

C/11/30 **Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

The Council received and considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11 which presented a summary of the activities undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the municipal year 2010/11.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11 be noted.**

C/11/31 **Annual Report from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader presented his annual report outlining policy priorities for the forthcoming year. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

**RESOLVED**

**That the annual report of the Leader outlining policy priorities for the forthcoming year be noted.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 7.43 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....