

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 25 October 2011.

PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)
Cllr A R Bastable (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	M C Blair	Cllrs	J Murray
	D Bowater		B Saunders
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		P Williams
	Mrs R B Gammons		

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Ms C Maudlin
B Spurr
N Young

Substitutes: Cllrs D Bowater (In place of Ms C Maudlin)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
K C Matthews

Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Officers in Attendance:	Mr J Cushing	– Economic Policy Manager
	Mr A Fleming	– Acting Director of Sustainable Communities
	Mr B Fong	– Senior Finance Manager
	Mr R Fox	– Head of Development, Planning and Housing Strategy
	Mr B Jackson	– Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
	Mr R Romans	– Team Leader, Minerals and Waste
	Mr P Storey	– Committee Services Officer
	Mrs L Wade	– Assistant Director, Economic Growth, Skills and Regeneration
	Ms S Wileman	– Service Development Manager

SCOSC/11/25 Members' Interests

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

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

None.

(c) **Any political whip in relation to any agenda item:-**

None.

SCOSC/11/26 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman announced that, at the request of Councillor Aldis who had to leave early, he would be taking the Highways and Transportation Task Force Report earlier in the meeting, following the Requested Items at minute 31.

SCOSC/11/27 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/11/28 Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/29 Questions, Statements or Deputations

The Chairman announced that no questions, statements or deputations from members of the public had been received in accordance with Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/30 Call-In

No decisions of the Executive were called-in to be reviewed in accordance with the Call-in Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/31 Requested Items

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/32 The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development introduced a report on the following items:

- The Minerals and Core Waste Strategy;
- A revised Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme; and
- The representations received from the Waste Core strategy consultation in 2010 and the Minerals Safeguarding Areas consultation in spring 2011 and the recommended responses to them.

The Minerals and Core Waste Strategy would be reported to the Executive on 15 November 2011 for approval to go to public consultation.

Members asked the Executive to consider whether a single Waste Strategy should be produced in the future, following the one now being considered, rather than a joint strategy. It was noted that there would be financial issues to be borne in mind when considering a single strategy.

It was noted that none of the Strategic Waste Management Sites identified in the Strategy Plan for Submission had been ruled out of consideration.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE EXECUTIVE: That consideration be given when the Waste Core Strategy is reviewed in 2013 as to whether a single Waste Strategy should be produced in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the representations received from the Waste Core Strategy consultation in 2010 and the Mineral Safeguarding Area consultation in spring 2011 and the recommended responses to them be noted.**
- 2. That the intended stages for the future progress of Minerals and Waste Core Strategy be noted.**
- 3. That the revised Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme for submission to the Secretary of State be noted.**

SCOSC/11/33 Draft Economic Plan and Consultation

The Assistant Director, Economic Growth, Skills and Regeneration presented a report on the draft Economic Development Plan, on which consultation had been launched on 30 June and closed on 30 September 2011. There had been an extremely positive response to the consultation. The final draft of the Plan would be informed by the consultation responses and would be taken to the Executive and full Council in November 2011 for approval. An implementation plan will then be put in place.

The Assistant Director, Economic Growth, Skills and Regeneration drew attention to three economic development initiatives in the plan as examples of the action the Council was taking:

- Creating the conditions for economic growth – working towards the development of the A5-M1 link road, on which the public inquiry would start in 2012;
- Supporting residents into work and training through the European Social Fund (ESF). Central Bedfordshire was one of very few local authorities which attracted co-finance from the ESF;
- Proactively engaging strategic local employers through a planned system of alerts to be able to offer them targeted support,

In answer to Members' questions the Assistant Director, Economic Growth, Skills and Regeneration considered that Central Bedfordshire was well placed

to attract companies wishing to relocate into the area and was not at a disadvantage against neighbouring districts, although in a competitive environment the Council would need to ensure this remained the case. Officers were also working hard to get young people in Central Bedfordshire into employment and were seeking to engage with young people to prepare them for the workplace.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive be informed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed and commended the report.

SCOSC/11/34 2012/13 Base Budget Review

The Acting Director of Sustainable Communities presented the proposed 2012/13 Standstill Budget for Sustainable Communities following a review of the 2011/12 base budget. The report presented a re-alignment of the base budget for 2011/12. Two areas had materially influenced the base budget review and these were the cessation of the Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership (BLCRP) following the removal of the central Government grant in 2010/11 and recognition of the 2011/12 contract price uplifts for Waste Services, the budget having been held centrally in 2011/12.

In answer to a Member's question it was noted that the residual money in the BLCRP would be used by the Police on the current speed cameras.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following be noted:

- 1. The proposed Standstill Budget for 2012/12 of £50,914k;**
- 2. A reduction in financial resources required compared to the August 2011 forecast outturn of £246k (forecast to budget comparison);**
- 3. A reduction of £298k compared to the approved budget of £51,212k (budget to budget comparison).**

SCOSC/11/35 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development presented a report on the performance of the Sustainable Communities directorate during quarter 1 of 2011/12. High performance continued to be delivered across a range of indicators.

Officers were asked to investigate why some of the performance information had not been scored, accepting that with low data returns this was not possible because information could be used to identify individuals.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

SCOSC/11/36 Highways and Transportation Task Force Report

The Chairman of the Committee introduced the report of the Highways and Transportation Task Force, which had met five times between July and October 2011 to consider and make recommendations on:

- The Council's draft "Approach to Parking";
- The managing agency contract (MAC) with Amey LG; and
- The Council's draft approach to road and footway maintenance – "Approach to Delivering a Sustainable Highway Network".

It was noted that the Task Force, to inform their deliberations, had looked at the operation of residents' parking zones (RPZs) in the Prince Regent area of Dunstable to test their concerns that RPZs were not an effective solution. There had been a good response from the residents there to a survey, with 68% of residents either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with RPZs, feeling that the scheme did not represent value for money and did not solve the problems of residents not being able to park near their own homes. The Task Force had concluded that RPZs were not satisfactory and did not cover their own operating costs. They recommended the use of controlled parking zones (CPZs) instead, although it was noted that small areas of RPZs could be created as part of those wider CPZs if they were considered appropriate.

The Task Force also looked at the managing agency contract with Amey LG and concluded that the contract operated well and offered good value for money. Officers were asked, however, to remind Amey that where sub-contractors were used they should have the same quality standards as Amey themselves.

It was noted that the public needed to have confidence in the enforcement of car parking issues and that this should be the case under the automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system which would be in place shortly.

Members asked that the Executive be made aware of the condition of the highways asset in Central Bedfordshire, which was deteriorating and would not be repairable if maintenance was reduced.

A member referred to the need for car parking charges to be sensitive to encourage use of town centres. It was noted that car parking charges were reviewed each year as part of the annual setting of fees and charges and such issues were considered at that time.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE:

1. **That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the following recommendations and comments of the Highways and Transportation Task Force for submission to the Executive in respect of the draft Approach to Parking:**
 - i) **the draft Approach to Parking is supported as the basis for the development of parking services in Central Bedfordshire;**

- ii) that controlled parking zones be used as a major measure for the management of car parking, provided that such zones are selectively introduced following proper evaluation and are sufficiently and adequately funded;
 - iii) that residents' parking zones as such should not be used by the Council in the future as a parking control measure and that any further requests should be considered in the context of controlled parking zones;
 - iv) that the parking standards (as set out in Appendix C to the draft Approach to Parking) are fair and reasonable.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advises the Executive that the MAC contract is the right type of contract for Central Bedfordshire Council and recommends that such a contract should be the default option when considering options for the re-letting of the contract.
 3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the Task Force's conclusion that the MAC contract is operating well and delivering value for money.
 4. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the potential improvements as identified in paragraphs 57 to 62 of the report of the Assistant Director (Highways and Transport) to the Highways and Transportation Task Force of 24 August 2011 and that those which have yet been implemented by the relevant Executive Member (or Executive if deemed necessary) for action by officers and Amey.
 5. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Executive that additional funds of £4m for each of the next four years be included in the highways maintenance budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests the officers to explore with Amey a mechanism to ensure that cases retain their Highways Help Desk reference number when they are passed on to other teams etc within the Council so that they can continue to be tracked.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests the officers to:
 - i) make provision for centralised information to be made available so that Members can be fully briefed about the emerging situation in respect of planned infrastructure and other developments over the ensuing three months;

- ii) **explore the implementation of a computerised GIS map to support such an arrangement;**
- iii) **request Amey to liaise with the Council's planning division to ensure Amey is better apprised of matters such as Section 106 agreements, major schemes etc.; and**
- iv) **requests the officers to update and reissue to all members the "Highways and Transport – Service provision Guide for Members" along with the one page map and contact details of Amey's area teams.**

SCOSC/11/37 Draft Work Programme 2011-12 and Executive Forward Plan

The Committee received a report from the Acting Director of Sustainable Communities on their latest draft work programme and the Executive Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2011 - 1 September 2012.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.48 a.m.)