

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 17 January 2013.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs	Mrs C F Chapman MBE	Cllrs	Ms C Maudlin
	Mrs R B Gammons		B Saunders
	Ms A M W Graham		P Williams
	K C Matthews		

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis	
		Mrs A Barker	Chairman of the Council
		R D Berry	
		M C Blair	
		A D Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development
		Mrs S Clark	Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services
		Mrs G Clarke	
		J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
		D Jones	
		B J Spurr	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
		R C Stay	Executive Member for External Affairs
		M A G Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
		J N Young	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development
		A Zerny	

Officers in Attendance:	Mr G Alderson	–	Director of Sustainable Communities
	Mr D Bowie	–	Head of Traffic and Safety
	Mrs J Dickinson	–	Head of Leisure Services

Mr R Fox	– Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy
Ms C Harding	– Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity)
Mr J Partridge	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mr S Robinson	– Planning Officer (Project Support/Admin)
Ms J Taylor	– Housing Officer
Ms S Templeman	– Senior Finance Manager
Ms S Wileman	– Service Development Manager

SCOSC/12/70 **Members' Interests**

Cllr Mrs Ruth Gammons commented that she had received several emails and letter from residents with regard to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan (Item 10).

Cllr Ken Matthews declared an interest in relation to the Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield, Development Brief (Item 11) as a Member of the Cranfield Lower School Board of Governors.

Cllr Ms Caroline Maudlin declared an interest in relation to Item 12 as a Member of the Internal Drainage Board.

SCOSC/12/71 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman stated that he had accepted an additional item of business as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The item relating to the Leisure Facilities Capital Programme would be considered under agenda Item 12 due to the links between the items.

SCOSC/12/72 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 December 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to Minute SCOSC/12/63 being amended to read that “Councillor Williams suggested that the report be amended to read the Council should open Houghton Regis swimming pool immediately at existing centre ...”.

SCOSC/12/73 **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/12/74 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Committee were informed by the Scrutiny Policy Adviser that several letters had been sent by residents to Committee Members in advance of the

meeting. Further letters relating to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan had been circulated for Members at the meeting. The Chairman commented that the issues raised by residents would be considered as part of the Committees discussion of the item.

In addition to the correspondence received in advance there were a further 16 speakers in relation to several items on the agenda. With the approval of those speakers it was agreed that all speakers would be invited to speak in advance of the relevant item.

In addition to the registered speakers Cllr Sue Clarke raised the following concerns in relation to Item 11:-

- Access to the proposed development site from Flitt Leys Close was insufficient, access would be worsened as a result of parking and development at the proposed NHS and school sites.
- It was suggested that building a school on the proposed site would result in “chaos” due to the number of parents and buses that would need to access the site.
- A traffic management scheme would be required that did not compromise the access of current residents if the scheme went ahead.
- A large single playground should be provided rather than lots of smaller ones.

In response to a question from a Member Cllr Mrs S Clarke commented that the additional parking proposed on the development brief would not alleviate concerns.

SCOSC/12/75 **Call-In**

The Committee was advised that a decision of the Traffic Management Meeting on 07 January 2013 had been called-in by Cllr Nigel Young as a ward Member in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2 of the Constitution. Cllr Young stated he had called in the decision relating to a proposed 7.5 tonne goods vehicle weight restriction on the Poynters Road area, Dunstable in order to clarify the Executive Member’s decision.

In accordance with the public participation procedure a member of the public was invited to speak. The speaker raised the following issues on behalf of the Poynters Road Action Group:-

- Recommendations relating to the 7.5 tonne goods vehicle weight restriction should be implemented immediately.
- There were presently excessive levels of pollution in the Poynters Road area.
- Traffic flow in the Poynters Road area was presently poor.
- The letter presented to the Traffic Management Meeting on behalf of A S Watson contained serious generalisations.

In response to the public speaker a Member asked whether a lorry ban could be extended to Park Road North. In response the Executive Member commented that a restriction could be added on this road in the future but presently it was not included in the Freight Strategy. In addition to providing

support to the call-in the Committee agreed that the information that was requested to be provided prior to the implementation of the proposed weight restriction should be made available as quickly as possible. It was also agreed that the interim remedial measures should be completed not later than the opening of the Woodside Link.

In addition the Committee agreed that the resident should be invited to attend the Traffic Management Meeting when they reconsidered the Call-in to present points on behalf of the Poynters Road Action Group.

RESOLVED

That the decision of the Traffic Management Meeting relating to the Poynters Road Area, Dunstable be referred back to the Committee for consideration at their next scheduled meeting with the following alternative recommendations:-

- 1. That the 7.5 tonne weight limit on Poynters Road will be implemented in line with the Councils adopted Freight Strategy**
- 2. That prior to the implementation of the 7.5 tonne weight limit the following take place:-**
 - 2.1 Information**
 - 2.1.1 The provision of satisfactory air quality monitoring reports on Luton Road and Poynters Road (post busway completion);**
 - 2.1.2 An economic impact assessment which resolves the issues raised by A.S. Watson;**
 - 2.1.3 A reassessment of the impact of reduced traffic on Luton Road following the reopening of the Busway.**
 - 2.2 Interim Remedial/ Mitigation Measures:**
 - 2.2.1 Poynters Road resurfacing with noiseless drain covers/ set back drainage**
 - 2.2.2 Advisory freight route signage on Luton Road Westbound at Skimpot Roundabout and at appropriate locations on the Woodside and adjacent industrial estates.**
 - 2.2.3 Boscombe Road gyratory/ traffic signals to be remodelled**
- 3. That Implementation of the scheme take place when the above satisfactory information is reported to the Executive Member / Traffic Management Meeting and the above interim remedial measures have been completed but not later than the opening of the Woodside Link.**

SCOSC/12/76 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/12/77 Executive Member Update

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Services advised the Committee of recent positive work in relation to community safety, which had resulted in a reduction in reoffending rates. Cllr Spurr also stated that there had been 182 incidents recorded using CCTV cameras operated by Central Bedfordshire Council, these recordings had resulted in 175 arrests.

The Executive Member Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning and Economic Development advised the Committee of consultations that were currently ongoing in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy Strategy; the Wind Turbine Strategy and the Development Strategy. The views of residents in relation to these strategies were welcomed. It was also reported that Central Bedfordshire Council were supporting Milton Keynes Council in the development of a City Deal. Several shared space schemes were also being developed, one on Hitchin Street, Biggleswade having just been completed, which Members were recommended to visit.

SCOSC/12/78 Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan: GTAA Review

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning and Economic Development introduced a report that set out the findings of a review of the Bedfordshire and Luton Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs (GTAA) Assessment. The Committee were informed that the purpose of the meeting was to consider a refresh of the GTAA. The Council were developing a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan (hereafter "the Plan") as it was a statutory obligation without which the Council was open to "hostile applications" and we may not be able to remove unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments. As the previous GTAA had been completed six years ago it was in need of a refresh. Cllr Young referred to case law regarding appeals in Guildford where the level of need had been underestimated and had not included assessment of those in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Cllr Young explained that the Council was required by government to agree a local plan for the next 15 years. The Council was required to provide a deliverable supply of sites to meet projected need for the next five years. This requirement would roll forward annually to show the deliverables for the following year. The Council was required to identify sites at least up to 2028 and had chosen to align the plan with the timescale of the Development Strategy, which ran to 2031. Consultation on what the plan should contain had been undertaken previously and any comments from the public would be accepted prior to the OSC meeting on 28 February. Further representations could be submitted to the Council prior meetings of the Executive and Full Council. The final, statutory, consultation would take place in May/June 2013 where all responses would be collated before being sent to the Secretary of State to be considered as part of the Examination in Public (EiP). Interested parties would be invited to speak at the EiP.

In addition the Head of Housing Strategy (R Fox) stated that the reference in Table 2 of the report to granted existing permanent permissions related to the period 2006 to November 2012. It was also suggested that the proposed question (b) for the Gypsy and Traveller count should be amended to read “do you have enough room on your site”. In addition it was confirmed that the site assessment criteria were unchanged from those agreed in April 2012. At the meeting in February 2013 Members will receive the scores attributed to the assessment in order to determine a short-list of sites. If it was agreed to only allocate sites for a period of five years then the Council would have to go through the process every couple of years.

The Corporate Policy Adviser (Equality and Diversity) advised the Committee on the Equality Duty and the duties of the Council in relation to persons with a “protected characteristic”, such as Gypsies and Travellers. The meeting was to be conducted in a manner that respected all groups of residents in Central Bedfordshire, discriminatory language would not be permitted.

In accordance with the public participation procedure the Chairman invited 12 speakers to address the Committee. Members of the public raised concerns in relation to several issues as detailed below at the bullet points (responses provided):-

- The development of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan had not been transparent or democratic. There was no clear audit trail in relation to the development of the Plan, which had also included misleading definitions. There had been delays relating to the publication of the site list and changes in the plan timetable relating to public consultation. Clarification was sought as to how residents could provide comments to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and how this would be publicised.

The law relating to consultation on Gypsy and Traveller Plans had changed since April 2012. The Council had undertaken a call for sites and the consideration of these had been a long process. Several sites were ruled out during assessment against the criteria in stage one and two criteria resulting in the long list of 35 sites that had been scored at stage 3 and would be included in the report. In February 2013 a full list of all sites that had been considered would be provided including details of their scores and why other sites had been rejected. Residents had an opportunity to submit representations to the OSC for consideration in February. A letter would be sent to Town and Parish Councils advising them of the arrangements for sending representations to the OSC. The Council would also issue a press-release. This was a non-statutory consultation and representations could also be sent to the Executive and Council in advance of their consideration of proposals. Statutory consultation would be undertaken in line with requirements in the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012).

- There had been amendments to the site assessment criteria that had been previously agreed in April 2012.

The Council had responded to a query regarding the site assessment criteria using information that was incorrect. This had led to confusion for which the Council had apologised. It was clarified that there had been no change to the criteria agreed in April 2012, which has been used throughout the assessment period.

- Previous consultation on the Plan had not been fit for purpose, particularly a consultation relating to proposed headings of the Plan rather than its content. This had also led to the misrepresentation of responses, several of which had been taken as being in 'support' of the Plan. The Council had also been insensitive in the manner in which it had engaged with residents to date, particularly sending letters to land owners in the week before Christmas.

The Council had been required to consult on the headings of the Plan rather than its contents. The statutory consultation on the content of the plan would be undertaken in May/June 2013. The Council sent letters to tenants prior to Christmas as it was considered fairer to advise tenants of the contents of the report before it was published.

- There was a lack of evidence of the need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The previous GTAA (2006) was outdated and it was inappropriate to determine need based on this previous assessment. There was a risk of inaccurate forecasting of requirements and it would be difficult for the Council to be confident of the level of need to 2031 based on current figures.

The 2006 GTAA identified the extent of need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Central Bedfordshire. There were concerns that the numbers in the GTAA were outdated and, for instance, it did not include the numbers of Travellers in bricks and mortar housing who may wish to return to living on traveller sites. A refresh of the GTAA would provide an understanding of this level of need and help to ensure that the plan would be determined "sound".

- Why the Council was seeking to identify pitches to 2031, using 3% compound growth, when it could choose to develop a plan for a shorter period.

Government guidance advised local authorities to identify allocations for a period of five years, rolling forward annually. The Council therefore had to have in place available sites up to 2018. Government guidance recommended that where possible local authorities should also identify allocations for 11-15 years, which would be up to 2028. The Council had decided to extend the period of the Plan to 2031 in order to align it with the Development Strategy. The previous Regional Spatial Strategy had proposed a 3% compound growth figure, which had been found to be 'sound'. Other area assessments suggested that a 6% compound growth figure was appropriate. If residents felt that the 3% compound growth figure was inappropriate this could be reflected during the statutory consultation period.

- The number of potential Gypsy and Traveller sites identified in the South of Central Bedfordshire was much higher than those identified for the north of Central Bedfordshire. There was considered to be an unfair allocation of potential sites across Central Bedfordshire. This would result in an inequitable impact on the settled community where allocations were highest.

There was no intention to unfairly allocate sites throughout Central Bedfordshire. At present Gypsy and Traveller sites were allocated throughout Central Bedfordshire as follows; 60% (South Central Bedfordshire); 33% (North East Central Bedfordshire); and 7.8% (Mid Central Bedfordshire).

- The importance of the Plan applying existing planning policy and taking account of agreed town plans.

The Council would take full account of national planning policy and guidance in the development of the Plan. Town plans were not a statutory document and whilst they would be taken into account in the development of the Plan they would not decide where allocations might take place.

- The importance of the Plan taking account of allocations in neighbouring local authorities. There was potential for tension to arise between adjacent settlements if allocations were made without being mindful of numbers in neighbouring areas.

Councils had a statutory duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in the development of the Plan. Neighbouring authorities would be invited to comment as part of the statutory consultation process. Central Bedfordshire Council would also co-operate with other local authorities on the development of their plans.

- Concerns relating to the proposed sites in Pottton in light of previous experience. In light of housing development in the area the allocation of sites in Pottton would create additional pressures on local infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities. It was not clear if the Council had fully considered the impact of proposed sites on existing local facilities. It was also questioned whether the Council had considered the impact of allocating land that was presently farmed.

During development of the Plan the Council would not take into consideration any assumptions regarding what might happen in the future as a result of allocating sites. There had been experience of overcrowding and unlawful sites in Pottton previously but those persons had been moved on. The average number of persons on a pitch was 3.2 and the aim would be no more than 10 pitches allocated to any one site. This additional number of persons in the local area would not create an undue impact on the local community or access to facilities. A total of 6.48% of the total pitches in Central Bedfordshire were located in Pottton.

- The inadequacy of the Council's website and inaccessibility of materials relating to the Plan. A person offered to provide feedback on the Council's website.

The Executive Member accepted the offer for the person to provide feedback on the Council's website and agreed that it was complicated to find information in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. The Council would consider how this could be addressed.

- Developing proposed sites on Greenfield sites would have a detrimental impact on the environment. It should not be considered appropriate to allow Gypsy and Traveller sites on Greenbelt land.

The Council would only consider allocating Gypsy and Traveller sites on Greenbelt in exceptional circumstances.

- Why the Council was reconsidering sites that had previously been rejected.

Members had the discretion to add sites back into the process if they felt appropriate, including those that had been previously rejected. All sites would however have to meet deliverability criteria. All sites could be rejected at Development Management committee.

- Why there were no proposed allocations in urban areas.

Much of south Central Bedfordshire, such as Icknield, was urban and there was no available land on which Gypsy and Traveller sites could be allocated. The only open space in urban areas was either recreational or playing fields. There were some sites proposed in urban areas such as Caddington, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. The location of sites in relation to wards was irrelevant.

- How the Council had arrived at the proposed 35 sites detailed in the report and when the pros and cons for these sites would be made available. It was also queried whether the Council would make available detail of all the sites that had been considered as part of the process and all Council owned land.

The Council had considered a total of 126 sites that had been put forward through the request for sites and consideration of Council-owned land. The Council had assessed the sites against the stage one and two criteria and the 35 contained in the report were considered to be appropriate for assessment at stage 3. The sites listed in the report were not ranked according to their score against the assessment criteria. A report containing all of the sites that had been considered at stage 1,2 and 3 and their scores would be made available to the OSC in February 2013 and published on the Council's website.

- The importance of Gypsies and Travellers integrating and interacting with the settled community.

It was important that the Council encouraged effective integration of both the Gypsy and Traveller and settled communities. The Council needed to encourage cohesion by supporting appropriate understanding of the experiences and lifestyle of Gypsy and Traveller Communities. The Council would also need to consider providing additional support to young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community to support them to stay in education for longer

Cllr Nicols sought clarification in relation to the period of informal consultation that the Executive Member had undertaken to provide prior to the next meeting of the OSC. Cllr Young clarified that representations could be sent to the OSC but this differed from the formal consultation that would be undertaken on the plan in May/June 2013. Informal responses would be accepted but this was not a statutory requirement in relation to consultation on the plan. Cllr Nicols stated that he recognised the need for a robust plan as a means of defending appeals.

Cllr Nicols also sought clarification as to whether the 1.5 field criteria that had been discussed previously had been included in the current sieving process. In response Cllr Young stated that the OSC had discretion to make recommendations on sites, which could include the use of 1.5 field criteria if Members felt appropriate. The Head of Development Planning & Strategic Housing stated that the site assessment criteria agreed in April 2012 had been applied, this did not include the 1.5 field criteria.

Cllr Nicols also queried whether sites that had been detailed in the previous McDonald Plan had been included in the process and queried whether the Miletree Road site in Leighton Buzzard was being considered as it was located in the Greenbelt. In response Cllr Young stated that the Miletree Road site was under appeal, the Council was fiercely opposed to any unlawful sites on Greenbelt. The Head of Development Planning & Strategic Housing stated that all of the sites identified in the McDonald study had been considered but were not being taken any further.

Cllr Zerny raised concerns in relation to the report that included:-

- Inappropriate distribution of proposed sites leading to a large cluster in the north of Central Bedfordshire.
- The Gypsy Council were not in agreement with the proposed extent of 'need'.
- Inadequate consultation that took place before the proposed sites were known and the lack of formal consultation. Further consultation should be undertaken before the meeting of Council to agree the plan.
- Lack of transparency in the process.
- The numbers of sites that would be allowed in one ward, which could have a disproportionate affect on the settled community. It was important that the plan encouraged 'peaceful integration' and that sites did not 'dominate' the settled community. Every effort should be made to ensure a firm and equitable spread of sites across Central Bedfordshire.
- It would be more appropriate to set a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan for a period of 10 years, rather than to 2031.

- Whether the compound growth figure was appropriate.
- The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders to provide additional land that could be used to deliver Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- The importance of providing adequate information to the public so that residents can make a considered judgement on the plans.
- The Committee had been condescending towards those residents who had spoken at the meeting.

In response Cllr Young stated that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required Councils to ensure that the scale of a site did not “dominate” a neighbouring community. The Council would apply this principle. It was not intended to locate all of the required pitches on one site as this would dominate a neighbouring community. Pitches would be allocated throughout Central Bedfordshire. The Council agreed that there should not be large sites, whilst the Council would anticipate and provide for family growth it would not encourage multi-family or impersonal sites.

Cllr Young stated that regulations required the Council to undertake a statutory consultation in May/June 2013. In relation to the NPPF it was not intended to let sites dominate the settled community, sites would usually be limited to 10 pitches and areas such as Sutton would not be dominated by any proposed sites. Cllr McVicar requested that Cllr Zerny explain outside of the meeting how the Committee had been condescending towards public speakers.

Cllr Shingler raised concerns that the proposed sites in Barton-Le-Clay were located in the Greenbelt, which was determined to be inappropriate in the NPPF except in exceptional circumstances. Cllr Young commented that the Council could make exceptions in special circumstances through the plan making process.

In recognition of the issues raised by public speakers and other Members and the responses that had already been given the Committee discussed the following further issues in detail:-

- It was undeniable that the previous GTAA required a refresh. It was unfeasible and unnecessary for the Council to undertake a full refresh. Consultants have identified the current weaknesses with the previous GTAA so it was sensible for the Council to work on those issues.
- The need to change the questions proposed for the Gypsy and Traveller count as they were presently too leading.
- How the Council could determine the extent of hidden need for Gypsies and Travellers and address assumptions regarding movement from bricks and mortar back to pitches.
- Whether an inspector would be content with a partial refresh of the GTAA. Cllr Young stated that POS Enterprises had provided the Council with reassurance that a partial refresh would be sufficient to address the identified weaknesses.
- Whether the Council would be able to complete a partial refresh of the GTAA before the meeting in February to an acceptable standard that would provide assurance that the assessment of need was accurate. Cllr Young stated that a partial refresh of the plan could be completed in

time for the meeting in February and would be published as part of the OSC papers.

- Whether previously considered sites were being considered again when the circumstances related to the sites were unchanged. It was confirmed that all sites were being considered again in the interests of fairness.
- Subsequent full refreshes of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and the level of need that would be undertaken as necessary and a minimum of every four to five years.

In addition the Director of Sustainable Communities commented that when a full GTAA was undertaken the Council would seek to undertake this in collaboration with other local authorities.

RECOMMENDED

That the OSC endorse the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Executive Member to undertake the following:-

- 1. Commission consultants to conduct a partial GTAA to confirm pitch requirements prior to publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan (any changes in pitch numbers will be brought before the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 February 2013).**
- 2. Consider a proposed time frame for the development of a full GTAA for Central Bedfordshire, working in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities where possible.**
- 3. Agree the proposed Gypsy and Traveller monitoring framework to develop a more substantial, locally refined evidence base for future policy.**
- 4. To amend question (b) proposed to be included in the Gypsy and Traveller Monitoring Framework to read "do you have enough room on your site?"**

(The meeting adjourned at 1.20pm and reconvened at 1.30pm)

SCOSC/12/79 Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield, Development Brief

The Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy introduced a report that outlined the development brief for the Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield. An additional paper was also circulated to the Committee that provided a response to several issues that had been highlighted at the Chairman's Briefing.

In accordance with the public participation procedure a member of the public was invited to speak. The speaker raised issues as Chair of Planning for Cranfield Parish Council including:-

- Development in Cranfield should be sustainable.
- Access to the proposed development site from Flitt Leys Close was insufficient.
- Access for residential cars.
- The proposed location of the school was unacceptable.

In addition to the issues raised by the speaker, Cllrs Matthews and Bastable raised the following additional concerns:-

- The potential unsuitability of the proposed school site subject to a survey that was being undertaken. The delivery of a school on this site would create issues relating to access. It was noted that the requirement for a school on this site had only been identified at the last minute. The Development Brief was imperfect but it was the best possible option for this site if the school could not be located on the west side of the development.
- The importance of adequate staff parking being made available on the proposed health centre and school sites. It was suggested that a lack of available parking would result in parents using the village hall car park or parking on the road. The roads in the area were narrow and the development brief would make access more difficult. It was noted that the NHS presently did not have the funding available to deliver a health centre.
- Council policy stated that drop-off points would not be permitted outside of schools, a suitable traffic management scheme would be required however if a school were provided, otherwise access would be sub-standard.
- Although access through Flitt Leys Close was imperfect the proposed traffic management scheme did go some way to alleviate concerns.

In response to the issues raised by the public speaker and other Members the Committee discussed the following:-

- The possible inclusion of on/off residential parking bays during specified hours that would allow normal movement along the road and use of the footpath. Further guidance was provided to Members in relation to proposed access/ traffic management approaches.
- Whether a development could commence in the knowledge that it could create problems, specifically in relation to access to a potential school.
- The principles of the Council's adopted Parking Strategy relating to the number of parking spaces to be provided per dwelling which had been applied to the development brief.
- Problems relating to the readability of the maps contained in the development brief and it not being clear if those sections of text highlighted in red were to be included in the brief or omitted. It was clarified that those comments highlighted in red were to be included in the development brief.

The Committee discussed the possibility of a school being provided on the site and the impact this would have on safe accessibility. Members discussed whether they could recommend the endorsement of the development brief in light of the uncertainty of the development including a school and the traffic problems that it could create. It was not clear when the Council would know whether a school was required but it was noted that potential traffic management schemes could be discussed at the planning application stage if it was decided that a school was required. The Committee also noted that if the development brief was not adopted by the Council, its absence would not prevent a planning application coming forward for a school on the proposed

site. Having an approved development brief in place would give the Council more control over the development of the site if the school was necessary.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

- 1. That a suitable traffic management scheme be in place in the event of a new lower school being provided.**
- 2. That a single large play space be provided rather than several small play spaces.**

SCOSC/12/80 Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17

The Director of Sustainable Communities introduced the, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment upon the draft budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 to 2017 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17, which had been presented and approved for consultation at a meeting of the Executive on 8 January 2013. The Director also introduced the Leisure Facilities Capital Programme which the Chairman had agreed to add to the agenda as an urgent item so that the view of the Committee could be presented to the Executive.

In response to the report and the further clarification provided by the Director of Sustainable Communities the Committee discussed the content of the report in further detail and raised the following issues:-

- Why there was a £30k cost pressure identified at SC115 in the Draft Revenue Budget for 2013/14 relating to the Drainage Board and no additional pressure in future years. The Director confirmed that for the 2012/13 budget a saving of £30K had been agreed for payments to the Drainage Board however this had not materialised so this was reinstating the budget
- Whether the £150k identified in the Capital Programme to reopen Houghton Regis swimming pool would be sufficient and how officers had reached that figure. It was also queried whether the Council would be able to afford to reopen the pool if it was going to cost more than £150k. In response it was commented that £150k was an estimate, a business case had been commissioned by the Executive that would provide a more accurate figure and would also include estimated costs to keep the swimming pool open for a period of five years. It was not guaranteed that the swimming pool would re-open but the money had been included in the Capital Programme so that if it was feasible then it could be. If the cost to reopen the swimming pool was higher than £150k Members could choose whether or not to proceed. Increasing the capital allocation would impact on other schemes in the Capital Programme.
- Funding for a potential new sports hall at Eaton Bray school would be considered as part of the Development with Stakeholders money identified in the capital programme

RECOMMENDED

That the Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17, Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 and the Leisure Facilities Capital Programme be endorsed as set out.

(Councillors Matthews and Gammons left the meeting during consideration of this item).

SCOSC/12/81 Fees and Charge 2013/14

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Economic Development introduced this report, which provided the Committee with details of the revised fees and charges rates to be effective from 1 April 2013 relating to the Sustainable Communities directorate. The Committee also received additional information in relation to fees and charges for Building Control, which had not been previously circulated.

In response to the report and the further clarification provided by the Director of Sustainable Communities and the Executive Member the Committee discussed the content of the report in further detail and raised the following issues:-

- Why charges to collect fridges and freezers from domestic premises had increased. It was clarified that increases in charges relate to the cost of disposing of these appliances
- Why the cost to administer high hedges legislation was so high. It was clarified that this cost was high due to the additional costs to the Council during an appeal process.
- The use of fees received in relation to sexual entertainment venues and whether the Council could use these fees for policing late night venues. It was clarified that the Council could decide to bring in a levy for licensed premises serving alcohol beyond midnight. A percentage of this levy was given to the police to support late night policing. If used, this levy would apply across the whole Central Bedfordshire area and not just in one location or venue. There were other approaches available to the Council to target specific premises and these were used where appropriate.
- There were currently few problems in Central Bedfordshire relating to fly-tipping and they were not thought to be as a result of charges for the removal of bulky waste.
- The issuing of fixed penalty notices, which was undertaken by the Environmental Protection Team.
- The charging for displaying commercial posters in Libraries. Both displaying and charging would cease.
- Specific problems in Flitwick relating to commercial posters. The Director undertook to ask Planning Enforcement officers to investigate concerns.
- The reduction in fees for the first annual resident parking permit, which Members supported

RECOMMENDED

1. **That Executive be aware of the Committees specific support for the reduction in fees for the first annual resident parking permit.**
2. **That Executive adopt the proposed schedule of fees and charges for 2013/14 as set out**

(Councillor Ms Alison Graham left the meeting during consideration of this item).

SCOSC/12/82 Work Programme 2012/13 and Executive Forward Plan

RESOLVED

That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2012/13 be endorsed.

SCOSC/12/83 Leisure Facilities Capital Programme

(This item was considered under Item 12, Minute SCOSC/12/80 refers).

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 3.25 p.m.)