

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 24 January 2013.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs A Barker (Chairman)
Cllr Ms C Maudlin (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	P N Aldis	Cllrs	Ms A M W Graham	Cllrs	J A G Saunders
	A R Bastable		Mrs D B Green		N J Sheppard
	R D Berry		Mrs D B Gurney		I Shingler
	L Birt		C Hegley		M A Smith
	M C Blair		P Hollick		Miss A Sparrow
	A D Brown		D J Hopkin		B J Spurr
	Mrs C F Chapman MBE		J G Jamieson		R C Stay
	Mrs S Clark		K Janes		A M Turner
	Mrs G Clarke		R W Johnstone		Mrs P E Turner MBE
	I Dalgarno		D Jones		M A G Versallion
	A L Dodwell		M R Jones		N Warren
	Mrs R J Drinkwater		D J Lawrence		B Wells
	P A Duckett		Mrs J G Lawrence		R D Wenham
	Dr R Egan		K C Matthews		P Williams
	Mrs R B Gammons		J Murray		J N Young
	C C Gomm		Mrs M Mustoe		A Zerny
	Mrs S A Goodchild		B Saunders		

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	D Bowater	Cllrs	T Nicols	Cllr	T Woodward
	N B Costin		R B Pepworth		
	D McVicar		A Shadbolt		

Officers:	Mr J Atkinson	–	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
	Miss H Bell	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Mr A Fleming	–	Service Director - Business Services
	Mrs E Grant	–	Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
	Ms M Peaston	–	Committee Services Manager
	Mrs J Moakes	–	Assistant Director Environmental Services
	Ms E Saunders	–	Assistant Director Commissioning
	Mr C Warboys	–	Chief Finance Officer

C/12/33 **Prayers**

Prayers were taken by Reverend Dean Henley, Rector for Campton, Clophill and Haynes and Assistant Dean for Ampthill & Shefford Deanery.

C/12/34 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

C/12/35 **Members' Interests**

Councillors Aldis and Murray each declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 16 – Independent Remuneration Panel, Special Responsibility Allowance - and withdrew from the meeting for this item of business.

C/12/36 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

There were none.

C/12/37 **Petitions**

Councillor Murray advised that he did not have a petition to submit in respect of roads in Dunstable.

C/12/38 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised of arrangements for her Civic Service to be held on 27 January 2013 and that she would be hosting a fundraising event, 'Let's Face The Music'on 3 March 2013, the proceeds from which would go to the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Hegley on her recent marriage.

The Chairman advised that further to a request from a Minority Group Leader, she had agreed to trial a new process under the 'Open Questions' later on the agenda. The Minority Group Leaders would be able to put forward one Open Question each before any other Open Questions were put. This would be included in the 30 minute time allocated for Open Questions.

C/12/39

Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader of the Council reported on:

- the draft budget for 2013/14, which were based on a zero Council Tax rise for the third successive year for Central Bedfordshire Council, no cuts in service and harmonization
- ongoing work including meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss maintaining local policing and support for the Integrated Offender Management and Troubled Families Initiatives
- lobbying Government over the resources made available to Central Bedfordshire and to promote the City Deal and our Local Plan
- in line with Your Space 2 programme the former offices of the Leader and Deputy Leader had been dismantled, thereby enabling accommodation for extra 6 staff
- the appointment of new senior managers including; Elizabeth Saunders- Assistant Director Social Care, Health and Housing, Tony Richards- Chief Procurement Officer, Gerard Jones - Assistant Director of Children's Services Operations.

C/12/40

Executive Member Presentations

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care Health & Housing reported on recent developments and successes within her housing portfolio area including:

- extra Care Housing in Central Bedfordshire
- the proposed Local Lettings Policy to be considered at Executive in February 2013
- performance in respect of housing voids and rent arrears
- new projects, including; Managing Older Peoples Housing, review of sheltered housing and the Housing Offer in Central Bedfordshire,
- the Local welfare Provision
- immediate/urgent projects, including; Tenancy Strategy, Tenants Scrutiny Panel meetings and Housing Allocations.

Councillor Hegley responded to questions.

Councillor Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities reported on recent activities within his portfolio area including:

- the number of arrests as a result of incidents recorded from the Dunstable CCTV control room
- work with the Community Safety Partnership to ensure a decrease in crime figures
- launch of a campaign to promote awareness of Domestic Abuse
- the Troubled Families initiative
- visitor/user numbers at Rushmere Park and Houghton Regis Leisure Centre

- a prestigious road safety award made to the Council for reducing road casualties and improving road safety

Councillor Spurr responded to questions.

C/12/41

Recommendations from the Executive

(i) Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council considered recommendations from the Executive held on 8 January 2013 concerning the Council Tax Support Scheme.

A replacement recommendation (3) and additional recommendation (4) were tabled at the meeting as follows:

Replacement Recommendation 3

That the proportion of the Council Tax Support Grant distributed to each parish will be calculated according to the percentage of Council Tax Support to be awarded in each parish as a percentage of the overall amount of Council Tax Support awarded to all Central Bedfordshire claimants and that the revenue budget to be considered by Council on 21 February 2013 be prepared on that basis.

Additional recommendation 4

To allocate £0.8m from the revenue budget for 2013/14 for distribution to parish councils using the formula set out in replacement recommendation 3 above.

The replacement and additional recommendations were proposed, duly seconded and upon being put to the vote, were carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the local Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in the Executive report, 8 January 2013, be approved;**
- 2. that the Council Tax Discretionary Discounts policy attached as Appendix D to the Executive report, 8 January 2013, be approved; and**
- 3. that the proportion of the Council Tax Support Grant distributed to each parish will be calculated according to the percentage of Council Tax Support to be awarded in each parish as a percentage of the overall amount of Council Tax Support awarded to all Central Bedfordshire claimants and that the revenue budget to be considered by Council on 21 February 2013 be prepared on that basis.**

4. that £0.8m be allocated from the revenue budget for 2013/14 for distribution to parish councils using the formula set out in replacement resolution 3 above.

(ii) Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy

The Council considered recommendations from the Executive held on 8 January 2013 concerning the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy.

RESOLVED

1. that the Treasury Management policy statement January 2013 to January 2016 as set out in the Executive report, 8 January 2013, be approved;
2. that the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 to 2015/16, the Investment Strategy 2013/14, detailed counterparty criteria 2013/14 and the capital, treasury and borrowing Prudential Indicators contained within Appendix B to the Executive report, 8 January 2013, be approved; and
3. that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement contained within Appendix B (section 11) to the Executive report which sets out the Council's policy on MRP be approved.

(iii) Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014

The Council considered a recommendation from the Executive held on 8 January 2013 concerning the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014.

RESOLVED

that the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014 be adopted.

C/12/42

Recommendations from General Purposes Committee

(i) Pay Policy Statement 2013/14

The Council considered recommendations from the General Purposes Committee held on 6 December 2012 concerning the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14.

A typographical error was noted in the Pay Policy Statement at paragraph 5 and corrected to read 8:1 instead of 1:8.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2013/14, as set out at Appendix A to the report of General Purposes Committee, 6 December 2012, be approved and adopted subject to the correction of the typographical error referred to above;**
- 2 that the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 be published as amended on the Council's website.**

(ii) Changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect The Planning Reform

The Council considered a recommendation from the General Purposes Committee held on 6 December 2012 concerning the changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect The Planning Reform.

RESOLVED

that the proposed changes to Part B2, Part D1 and Part H3 of the Council's Constitution, required to comply with changes under the Localism Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 in relation to development planning, as set out at Appendix A of the General Purposes report, 6 December 2012, be approved and adopted.

(iii) Transfer of Public Health Functions to the Council

The Council considered recommendations from the General Purposes Committee held on 6 December regarding the transfer of Public Health functions to the Council.

RESOLVED

that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to:

- a) make the required changes to Part H of the Constitution with regard to the appointment of a Director of Public Health, as outlined in the submitted report, and having regard to any regulations made by the Secretary of State under the Health and Social Care Act 2012;**
- b) make the required changes to Part E of the Constitution with regard to the formation of a Health and Wellbeing Board, as outlined in the report below, and having regard to any regulations made by the Secretary of State under the Health and Social Care Act 2012;**
- c) make any further changes to the Constitution that may become necessary in the light of developments that arise before the transfer of public health functions takes effect on 1 April 2013, following consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.**

C/12/43 **Recommendation from Licensing Committee**

The Council considered recommendations from Licensing Committee held on 9 January 2013.

RESOLVED

1. that the draft **Gambling Act 2005 Policy** be adopted;
2. that the **Assistant Director of Environmental Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Sustainable Services, be given delegated authority to undertake any necessary minor amendments to the policy prior to the publication.**

C/12/44 **Motions (if any)**

No motions had been received under Rule No. 17.

C/12/45 **Written Questions**

A written question had been submitted under Rule No. 13.2 by Councillor Murray as follows:

“How many conferences and other meetings have senior officers attended and will attend during 2012/13?”

What has been the total cost to the Council in attendance fees, travel, employee time spent away from their posts, accommodation, subsistence, entertainment and any other costs?”

The Deputy Leader advised that information required to answer the question did not exist and that ascertaining the necessary information would be resource intensive.

Two written questions had been submitted by Councillor Dr Egan as follows:

(i) Can I ask the portfolio holders responsible for the Leisure Strategy why, on page 346, Agenda Item 16 of the Executive Papers, 8th January, 2012, the words, “new 6 lane 25 meter pool” appear in paragraph 24.

On numerous occasions I have questioned why Houghton Regis should be given a 6 lane pool when Flitwick is to have a proposed 8 lane pool. I was given an assurance at the last meeting I attended that an 8 lane pool would be considered for Houghton Regis. I feel as if my comments have been completely ignored, even when I have given cogent arguments for changing the number of lanes in the projected pool.”

Councillor Dr Egan reiterated her reasons for seeking a larger pool.

Councillor Dalgarno, Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Services responded, commenting on:

- population growth predictions
- the projected use of Council facilities in Flitwick and Houghton Regis
- investment proposals

(ii) It is almost two years since I asked that the play area in Kirton Way, Parkside, Houghton Regis, be demolished. I have attached my oral question to Council in September 2011. To date this monstrosity still scars the landscape. Can I ask when Central Bedfordshire Council plans to do the right thing and provide an appropriate facility for the area.”

Councillor Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities services responded.

He advised that the land was in private ownership and that action open to the Council included seeking legal prosecution or taking direct action to clear the land and recover the costs.

C/12/46

Open Questions

Further to her announcement under minute 3/12/38 above, the Chairman invited the Opposition Group Leaders to ask a question each prior to the consideration of questions that had been placed in the Open Questions receptacle.

1. Councillor Murray asked a question about how the Council intended to deal with a possible population increase in terms of the effects on health, education and housing.

The Leader advised that there were housing and planning strategies in place to manage population changes.

2. Councillor Aldis asked a question about the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

The Leader advised that improvements were underway through the Council's Customer First project, which included improvements to the website.

3. Councillor Egan asked a question about street lighting issues in her ward.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities advised that many of the old street lights were now failing. Although the old style lights were scheduled to be replaced, lights located in crucial areas that required replacement would take precedent. The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities undertake to advise of the schedule of works.

4. Councillor Aldis asked a question about plans Ofsted plans to ask schools about their views on the support provided by their local authority.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the feedback received from schools about the support and services provided from Central Bedfordshire Council was positive.

5. Councillor Egan asked a question about the continuation of the Highways Members Customer Service bulletins.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities would provide a written update.

6. Councillor Williams asked a question about car parking pressures at Prior House.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that plans were in place to provide an additional 50 car parking spaces, with works being scheduled to commence in the near future.

7. Councillor Murray asked a question about a resolution to the traffic problems in his ward.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities advised that arrangements to place planters strategically to encourage the efficient movement of vehicles in a one way street were scheduled to commence in February 2013.

C/12/47

Calendar of Meetings

The Council considered a report of the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources seeking approval of the Calendar of Meetings for the municipal year 2013-2014.

RESOLVED

that the draft Calendar of Council and Committee meetings for the period May 2013 – June 2014 as set out at Appendix A to the report submitted be approved.

C/12/48

Independent Remuneration Panel - Special Responsibility Allowances

Councillors Aldis and Murray withdrew from the meeting for this item of business.

The Council considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources recommending the payment of a special responsibility allowance to the Leader of the Independent Group.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Leader of the Independent Group be paid a special responsibility allowance equal to that of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group with effect from 22 November 2012;**
- 2. that the Allowances Scheme in Schedule 1 of the Constitution be amended so that in the event of there being no largest minority group, the Leaders of the minority groups with the largest equal numbers each receive a SRA allowance equivalent to that normally payable to the Leader of the largest minority group;**
- 3. that SRAs for minority group leaders be included in the next review of Members' Allowances.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.30 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated