

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 25 April 2013.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs	Mrs R B Gammons	Cllrs	T Nicols
	Ms A M W Graham		B Saunders
	K C Matthews		P Williams

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R W Johnstone

Substitutes: Cllrs A Shadbolt (In place of R W Johnstone)

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis	
		D Bowater	Vice-Chairman of the Council
		A D Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development
		Dr R Egan	
		D J Hopkin	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		D Jones	
		B J Spurr	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
		B Wells	Deputy Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
		J N Young	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Officers in Attendance:	Mr B Carter	– Corporate Policy & Scrutiny Manager
	Ms S Frost	– Interim Local Planning and Housing Team Leader
	Mr D Hale	– Planning Manager South
	Mr T Saunders	– Assistant Director, Planning
	Ms S Templeman	– Senior Finance Manager

Mr J Tombe – LTP Team Leader
Ms S Wileman – Service Development Manager

Others in
Attendance

SCOSC/13/1 **Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest or political whip in relation to any agenda items.

SCOSC/13/2 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

Further to the agenda and papers for the meeting, previously circulated, the Chairman referred to an additional transport briefing note circulated at the meeting, which members of the Committee would have time to read prior to consideration of the Framework Plan for Land East of Leighton Linlade.

SCOSC/13/3 **Minutes**

Prior to Committee confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record, there was a discussion regarding Minute SCOSC/12/99, Planning Guidance on Wind Energy Development in Central Bedfordshire, more specifically relating to the action taken with regard to the recommendation made to Executive about the need to rebalance the Guidance Note such that it was more supportive of wind energy.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 February 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/13/4 **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/13/5 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/13/6 **Call-In**

The Committee were advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to them under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix A to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

SCOSC/13/7 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/13/8 Executive Member Update

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Services advised the Committee that the one year Highways programme had recently been agreed, details of which were now on their way to all Members of the Council, with the 4 year programme to follow. He further advised the Committee of a recent operational change in the repair response times of Category 1 potholes following notification by members of the public. A repair would now be instigated within 5 days of notification rather than the current 1 day to allow the organisation to assess the need or otherwise of additional repairs that may be necessary to the highway in the immediate vicinity of the pothole. He assured Members of the Committee however that this would not preclude a more urgent response if the matter was considered an emergency. Councillor R Egan raised a specific query regarding the progress of road repairs in Houghton Regis, which the Executive Member agreed to respond to separately in writing.

The Deputy Executive Member Sustainable Communities Services advised the Committee of the current status of the BEaR project, and confirmed that the competitive selection process for the long-term waste treatment contract was progressing well and a report would be presented to this Committee in the summer (prior to Executive consideration) regarding a preferred bidder. He further advised the Committee of the success of the Council's winter gritting programme and the free distribution of 1 ton salt bags to Town and Parish Councils, which had been accepted by 28 of these Councils. In response to a query regarding the Council's approach to weed killing, the Deputy Executive Member confirmed that a review of both grass cutting and weed killing was currently underway, the results of which he would share with the Committee at a future meeting.

SCOSC/13/9 Framework Plan for Land East of Leighton Linlade

Prior to consideration of this item, the Chairman invited 2 public speakers to address the Committee.

Speaker 1, John Gelder of Voluntary and Community Action, raised concerns about the public consultation process, which in his opinion had been flawed due to the fact that his organisation's written response to the draft Framework Plan had not been captured within the summary of comments and responses received (Appendix B of the draft Framework Plan report). Both the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning & Economic Development and the Assistant Director, Planning apologised for this oversight and provided a commitment that the response from Voluntary and Community Action would be given consideration prior to the Executive's consideration of the draft Framework Plan. The Executive Member also assured the Committee that he would investigate the matter further and would provide an explanation as to why this omission had occurred and if there had been any others.

Speaker 2, Peter Snelling raised a number of concerns regarding:-

- Transport, the Eastern Relief Road and its link with the A505;
- Delivery of the social infrastructure promised; and
- The potential need for a boundary review in Leighton Linlade and Eggington.

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning & Economic Development then introduced his report, with specific reference to: the status of the draft Framework Plan and its relationship with the Development Strategy; the transport briefing paper and strategic traffic modelling. Members of the Committee discussed the report and draft Framework Plan in detail and raised the following issues:-

- The flexibility of schooling provision generally and the potential for some form of tertiary provision in Leighton Linlade in the future;
- Leighton Linlade Town Council's concerns regarding:
 1. the need for new community infrastructure associated with this development and the sufficiency of S106/CIL funding to deal with it;
 2. the importance of delivering the employment land and job opportunities being put forward in the draft Framework Plan; and
 3. the impact of additional traffic arising from the development and the alternative traffic flows that might arise as a result of the new relief road and the A5-M1 link, etc

The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning & Economic Development confirmed that the Town Council would receive a written response to its concerns but notwithstanding this written response, he assured Members of the Committee of his full commitment to community infrastructure and his confidence that sufficient S106 funding would be available for such infrastructure. He was also confident that employment would be delivered as planned and that traffic at peak periods would be mitigated by, amongst other actions, the Dash Direct bus service;

- The ability of Anglian Water Company to provide for the foul water generated by the development and the Council's ability to improve water efficiency generally through the Development Strategy;
- The significant impact the development would have on the village of Eggington and the need therefore for the Framework Plan to recognise Eggington's important role in that development. With regard to this specific point, the Committee recognised the S106 challenges and electoral conflicts that may be created if current boundaries were maintained.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

That the draft Framework Plan for Land East of Leighton Linlade be adopted subject to:-

- 1. Consideration of the written comments of Voluntary & Community Action and any others that may have been omitted;**
- 2. Recognition of Eggington's important role in the development and the S106 challenges and electoral conflicts that may be created if current boundaries were maintained.**

SCOSC/13/10 Quarter Three Performance Report

The Committee received the quarter 3 performance report for the Sustainable Communities Directorate and noted performance for the period in question.

NOTED the report

SCOSC/13/11 Quarter Three Capital Budget Monitoring

The Committee received the quarter 3 capital budget monitoring report for the Sustainable Communities Directorate. In considering the report, Members discussed its value given the historic nature of the content and the time that had elapsed since the end of the period in question i.e. 31 December 2012. It was Members opinion that the Executive should consider what actions could be taken to ensure more timely receipt in the future.

NOTED

- 1. the actual gross expenditure to date of £19,451k and external funding of £6,307k resulting in net expenditure of £13,145k;**
- 2. a forecast gross expenditure of £27,528k and external funding of £10,120k resulting in net expenditure of £17,408k; and**
- 3. a forecast delay from 2012/13 to 2013/14 of gross expenditure of £3,632k, external funding of £539k, net expenditure of £3,093k due largely to external factors beyond the control of the Council.**

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

That the Executive considers what actions it could take to ensure more timely receipt of quarterly budget monitoring reports in the future.

SCOSC/13/12 Quarter Three Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Committee received the quarter 3 revenue budget monitoring report for the Sustainable Communities Directorate. In considering the report, Members requested that in future the costs of Building Control and Albion Archaeology be shown separately.

Members also discussed the value of the report given the historic nature of its content and the time that had elapsed since the end of the period in question i.e. 31 December 2012. It was Members opinion that the Executive should consider what actions could be taken to ensure more timely receipt in the future.

NOTED

- 1. the forecast net expenditure outturn of £47,433;**
- 2. the proposed use of specific reserves of £789k with a proposed transfer to reserves of £345k, and**
- 3. The Director's year-end forecast of an under spend of £723k after the use of specific reserves.**

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

That the Executive considers what actions it could take to ensure more timely receipt of quarterly budget monitoring reports in the future.

SCOSC/13/13 Work programme 2013/14 and Executive Forward Plan

Members discussed the Committee's forthcoming work programme and agreed to the addition of 3 further items as follows:-

- BEaR Project report regarding a preferred bidder (during the summer and prior to Executive consideration);
- Equality & Diversity Strategy (6 June meeting)
- An overview of the Sundon Rail Interchange Programme (25 July meeting)

RESOLVED

That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2012/13 be endorsed subject to the addition of the 3 items mentioned above.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.00 p.m.)