

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 10 December 2015.

### PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)  
Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater  
F Firth  
C C Gomm  
Ms A M W Graham

Cllrs J Kane  
K C Matthews  
R Morris

Members in Attendance: Cllrs J G Jamieson

Leader of the Council  
and Chairman of the  
Executive  
Executive Member for  
Regeneration

J N Young

Officers in Attendance: Mr M Coiffait  
Mr J Longhurst  
  
Mr J Partridge  
Mrs R Preen  
Ms H Price  
Mrs G Stanton  
Ms S Templeman

- Director of Community Services
- Director of Regeneration and Business
- Head of Governance
- Scrutiny Policy Adviser
- Head of Business Performance
- Chief Communications Officer
- Senior Finance Manager

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### SCOSC/15/39 Members' Interests

None.

### SCOSC/15/40 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that as a result of a previous request of the Committee, a response had been received from Anglian Water (AW), which outlined that they were integrating several service improvements which included; developing a clearer process for assessing planning applications; considering the role of planning conditions; producing a planning guide for developers; ensuring a proactive approach with town and parish councils; and using parish news letters to circulate information.

AW had accepted that their consultation responses could be clearer and that improved internal communication would enhance the service provided. It had also been agreed that CBC would signpost developers to AW's own pre-application service where planning applications involved 10 or more dwellings.

A 3 month trial would begin on 01 January 2016 enabling the Council to consult AW on all submissions for pre-application advice involving 10 or more dwellings and the Council would undertake a 'critical friend' role in order to provide feedback to AW on their work streams. A further review meeting would be organised in April 2016 to assess the progress of the 3 month trial.

The Chairman also highlighted that residents in Downs Road, Dunstable had expressed concerns regarding a recent Executive Member decision, which may be considered at a future OSC meeting before a final decision was taken by the Executive Member in early 2016.

#### **SCOSC/15/41 Minutes**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 October 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

#### **SCOSC/15/42 Petitions**

None.

#### **SCOSC/15/43 Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

#### **SCOSC/15/44 Call-In**

None.

#### **SCOSC/15/45 Requested Items**

None.

#### **SCOSC/15/46 Executive Members Updates**

The Executive Member for Regeneration provided an update relating to the following:-

- A recent planning application approval for a care home facility in Maulden.
- Work to ensure that S106 agreements were met, enabling planning applications to proceed at an appropriate pace.
- A 22% increase in Building Control casework, which was generating vital funds for the Authority.
- Additional jobs created by Amazon in Central Bedfordshire.
- Many businesses within Central Bedfordshire were expanding and recruiting staff, which reflected the strong position locally.
- Performance in relation to connections to superfast broadband locally.

#### **SCOSC/15/47 5 Year Plan Performance Monitoring**

The Leader of the Council delivered a presentation outlining the proposed approach to delivery and performance management of the 5 Year Plan. The

Committee were asked to consider whether the proposals, drivers and KPI's behind the data were appropriate.

In light of the presentation Members discussed the following in detail:-

- The importance of a focus on improving pavements and roads, which was an important issue for residents. It was also crucial to expand upon accessibility to shops and utilities.
- The critical importance of public transport in relation to satisfaction of place and that rural satisfaction may decline if it was not prioritised appropriately. In response the Leader acknowledged that public transport was an important issue for many but there were economical difficulties to overcome with regards to subsidised transport. Striking a balance between provision and demand was crucial and it was agreed that good transport links could also support independent living.
- The importance of encouraging volunteering locally, with an emphasis on volunteer led strategies.
- The benefit of gathering data with regards to health and wellbeing in order to gauge how successful a drive towards the use of leisure facilities had been. In response the Director for Community Services confirmed that the data with regards to usage was available and would be presented to the next OSC meeting.
- The importance of a proactive and robust approach to reducing crime despite much of the control laying in the hands of the police and other agencies.

**NOTED the presentation and agreed the ongoing approach with regards to delivery and performance monitoring of the 5 Year Plan.**

#### **SCOSC/15/48 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report**

The Senior Finance Manager delivered a presentation to the Committee, detailing the financial position of the Directorate along with areas of underspend, overspend and outstanding debt for Quarter 2.

In light of the presentation Members agreed it would be useful to receive a breakdown of the capital variance between underspend, overspend and slippage within future reports, along with a reference to previous debt levels which the Directors agreed to include from Quarter 3 onwards.

**NOTED the report.**

#### **SCOSC/15/49 Work Programme 2015/16 and Executive Forward Plan**

**AGREED the work programme agreed subject to the addition of the following:-**

- The Development Strategy position update in January 2016.
- A report on progress and future direction of SEMLEP in March 2016
- The Parking and Passenger Transport Strategy in March 2016.
- Waste Management update in March 2016.
- The Local Plan in March 2016.
- The Development Strategy in March 2016.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.30 a.m.)