

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 12 January 2017.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs D Bowater
Ms A M W Graham
J Kane

Cllrs K C Matthews
R Morris
G Perham

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs A Barker

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs A D Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
	J Chatterley I Dalgarno	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
	Cllr S Dixon	Executive Member for Education and Skills
	P Downing	Vice Chairman Social Care, Health & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Mrs S A Goodchild J G Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
	B J Spurr	Executive Member for Community Services
	B Wells	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
	J N Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

Officers in Attendance:	Mr S Cook	– Assistant Operations Team Leader
	Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
	Mr C Proto	– Parking Enforcement Manager
	Ms A Rowland	– Team Leader Sustainable Transport Team

Public: 2

SCOSC/16/50 Members' Interests

None.

SCOSC/16/51 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman summarised recent progress of the Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Panel (OSCP) highlighting the need for Scrutiny Committees to add value and influence change. A meeting had been arranged for 24 January 2017 at which all Members were invited to offer their views on suggested improvements.

SCOSC/16/52 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/16/53 Petitions

None.

SCOSC/16/54 Questions, Statements or Deputations

The Chairman announced that two members of the public had registered to speak at the commencement of item 14.

SCOSC/16/55 Call-In

None.

SCOSC/16/56 Requested Items

None.

SCOSC/16/57 Executive Members Updates

The Deputy Executive Member for Community Services outlined the opening date of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in Leighton Buzzard. He also commented works to the Thorn Turn waste site were well advanced. The possible closure of Dunstable Leisure centre for refurbishment was confirmed as June or July 2017.

The Executive Member for Regeneration highlighted continuing work to the Local Plan despite a pause in the consultation process due to the delayed release of a Government Housing White Paper. Members were informed that the allocation of sites offered for development by land owners was likely to occur in the Autumn of 2017 and that Members were seeking an update from developers in relation to road completions on the Houghton Regis North 1 site.

SCOSC/16/58 Draft Budget & Medium Term Financial plan 2017/18 – 2020/21

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a report highlighting financial pressures, proposed efficiency savings and public consultation timelines in relation to the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Members' attention was drawn to appendices F and G which detailed the primary statutory provisions relevant to the services provided by each directorate and the Chief Finance Officer's assessment of Council Reserves. Members were reminded of the importance of their understanding of each of these elements so that when making recommendations they were doing so on a fully informed basis.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- Proposed changes to Council Tax with overall support for a 4.75% increase, which included a proportion of ring fenced funding for Social Care provision.
- Challenges identified within the report and the subsequent impact on services.
- Members acknowledged the information within appendices F and G and declared satisfaction with the information they had been provided with.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee broadly support the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan including proposed increases to Council Tax.

SCOSC/16/59 Draft Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2020/21

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a report outlining proposals to the 4 year Capital Programme and the timeline for public consultation. Members were advised that their recommendations would form part of the final report, which was due to be considered by the Executive on 7 February 2017.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The need to explore whether those capital schemes identified as delayed could be replaced by others on a reserve list.
- The impact of capital projects on the revenue budget and a need to revisit this at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the Capital programme and endorse the report to the Executive.

SCOSC/16/60 Period 6 (Quarter 2) – 2016/17 Revenue Budget Monitoring

The Head of Financial Performance delivered a presentation detailing the financial position of the Directorate along with areas of underspend, overspend and outstanding debt for Quarter 2.

NOTED the report.

SCOSC/16/61 Q2 Performance report

The Committee received a report detailing the performance position for the Directorate for Quarter 2 and the Director for Community Services highlighted the overall improvement in performance statistics.

In light of the report Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The role of the police and the difficulty of measuring public perception of safety.
- The importance of securing a 5 year land supply in order to meet housing demand and the importance of correctly identifying housing need within the report.
- The importance of neighbourhood plans and the role of the Local Plan in reinforcing their use.

In light of the discussion and the points raised Members were reassured that where responsibility lay with utility companies, any insurance claims were passed on accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that additional information be provided within a future report in relation to leisure centre performance.

SCOSC/16/62 School Parking Task Force Enquiry

The Chairman of the Schools Parking Task Force introduced the report, highlighting difficulties faced by each area and acknowledging that a single solution would not solve all the regional problems experienced in relation to parking outside of schools.

The Chairman introduced two Head Teachers from local schools, both of whom had contributed to a public survey. In light of their experiences they raised several points, including the following:-

- The need for the Council and partners to work closely with schools planning and developers at an early stage in order to identify any parking issues and provide mitigations as necessary.
- The benefits of staggering school start and finish times, although there were logistical difficulties in offering this in every instance.
- That the primary focus should be the safety of school children and parents have a responsibility to drive and park safely in the vicinity of schools.
- With schools' primary focus being education, the difficulties of staff time being spent managing parking issues outside of schools, leading to a need for additional parking enforcement officers in the vicinity of schools.
- The need to look at alternative solutions in light of the changing nature of car use and parental choice with regards to school placements.

In light of the report and comments made by the public speakers Members discussed the following in summary:-

- The use of ANPR camera cars in isolation outside of schools, which had proved cost prohibitive due to restrictions on their use.
- Support for a focus on speed reduction and safety measures, the promotion of healthy and sustainable travel to school and the use of current

policy to introduce planning conditions on expanding or new build schools where appropriate.

- The improvements which had already been realised in those schools that had already introduced staggered start and finish times.
- The benefits of a park and stride solution in collaboration with schools, the Council and partners.
- The importance of recognising the possibility of dispersing cars to a wider area if restrictions were placed directly outside of schools.
- The need to consider the use of social media and other technology to send a positive message in relation to schools parking.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. That the Executive implement the recommendations as detailed within the report, assigning each agreed recommendation to the appropriate directorate.**
- 2. That a copy of the report be circulated to all schools.**

SCOSC/16/63 Work Programme 2016/17 and Executive Forward Plan

AGREED the work programme for 2016/17 subject to the following amendments:-

- **Parking Strategy – 17 March 2017**
- **Partnership Working with Anglian Water – May 2017**
- **Leisure Strategy – May 2017**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.30 p.m.)