

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 28 September 2017.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Chairman)
Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker R D Berry M C Blair D Bowater A D Brown J Chatterley Mrs S Clark K M Collins I Dalgarno Cllr S Dixon P Downing K Ferguson Mrs J Freeman E Ghent C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild	Cllrs	Ms A M W Graham Mrs D B Gurney Mrs C Hegley P Hollick J G Jamieson R W Johnstone D J Lawrence Mrs J G Lawrence K C Matthews Ms C Maudlin D McVicar R Morris T Nicols G Perham A Ryan J A G Saunders	Cllrs	D Shelvesy I Shingler P Smith B J Spurr R C Stay G Tubb A M Turner M A G Versallion B Walker N Warren B Wells R D Wenham T Woodward J N Young A Zerny S Watkins
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Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	N B Costin Mrs A L Dodwell P A Duckett	Cllrs	F Firth K Janes Mrs T Stock	Cllrs	T Swain Cllr M Liddiard
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Officers:	Miss H Bell Mr R Carr Mr M Coiffait Mrs S Harrison Mr J Longhurst Mrs J Ogle Mr D Galvin Mrs S Hobbs Mrs M Scott	– Committee Services Officer – Chief Executive – Director of Community Services – Director of Children's Services – Director of Regeneration and Business – Director of Social Care, Health and Housing – Head of Financial Performance – Senior Committee Services Officer – Director of Public Health
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C/17/26

Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 July 2017 were approved by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

C/17/27

Prayers

Prayers were taken by The Reverend Stephen Nuth.

C/17/28

Members' Interests

No declarations of interest were received.

C/17/29

Questions, Statements and Deputations

The Chairman advised that two members of the public had registered to speak to address the Council:

1. Mr Hamilton raised concerns about the imminent closure of Rosewood Court, Dunstable and referenced his previous representations to the Council about this home.

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing reiterated the Council's commitment to ensuring residents receive a high standard of care. She spoke about the formal communication that had been received from the provider of Rosewood Court of its closure and the work that was now in place to ensure the safe rehoming of the residents to suitable alternative placements. In addition, the Council had strengthened its due diligence procedures.

2. Mrs Shipston asked a question about the best method of communicating with Councillors during the second phase of the Draft Local Plan consultation process. She expressed her concern about the disappointing level of response that she had received from an email addressed to all Members of the Council about specific questions in her ward.

Councillor Young, Executive Member for Regeneration, advised that all Members of the Council had received briefings on the Local Plan, including appropriate areas for growth for housing and infrastructure. The next stage of the Local Plan was not yet underway until all consultation responses had been analysed, so individual Members would have found it difficult to comment on the questions raised by Mrs Shipston. Councillor Young encouraged Mrs Shipston meet with her ward representatives during the second stage of the Local Plan.

The next stage of the Local Plan was not yet underway until all responses had been received and that until the sites had been allocated for growth, members would at present not be in the best position to comment. Councillor Young encouraged Mrs Shipston to talk and meet with her ward representatives during the second stage of the Local Plan.

C/17/30

Petitions

No petitions were received.

C/17/31

Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman advised of events that she had attended since the last meeting of the Council, including:

- The High Sheriff's Garden Party;
- a service for Judges, which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the opening of Luton Crown Court;
- a visit to the Vauxhall Warehouse, Toddington Road, Luton;
- The Lord Lieutenant's reception to celebrate the honours given to residents in Bedfordshire, including the New Years and Queen's Birthday Honour. Kenneth Harvey a member of Central Bedfordshire staff had been honoured at the ceremony.
- presentation of reading prizes at Flitwick library for a summer holiday reading challenge, which had covered the whole of Central Bedfordshire. Over 3000 children took part and more than 69,000 books were read. The Chairman placed on record her gratitude to the Team Librarian and staff for organising the challenge.

The Chairman advised that Catherine Jones, Chief People Officer would be leaving Central Bedfordshire Council to retire. The Chairman recorded her best wishes to Catherine.

C/17/32

Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications

The Leader spoke about a Digital Strategy Award that had been awarded to the Council for its approach to raising public awareness about the Local Plan. He referred to a video that had been made on the Local Plan which had achieved nearly 200,000 views.

The Leader updated the Council on the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor.

C/17/33

Executive Member Presentations

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, reported on developments within her portfolio including:

- plans for a second independent living scheme, Houghton Regis Central. Tenders would be issued in December, with bids expected by March 2018. Other projects were under way, including Croft Green and Crescent Court. In light of the housing projects, Councillor Hegley had visited companies involved in Modern Methods of Construction and a factory demonstrating structurally insulated panels;
- housing performance was doing well;
- work on the Empty Home Programme;
- homelessness which had grown compared to previous years . Forecasting of demand numbers was being undertaken by officers;

- Priory View, Dunstable, had received 3 awards in the Anglia in Bloom competition;
- visit to Oak Manor, Shefford, which was an example of a Modern Methods of Construction development;
- Ofsted's inspection of Children's Services;
- attendance at a Parent Forum for young children with needs and disabilities;
- Cheering for volunteers plans were underway for 2018 and displays were now available in the reception area at Priory House to for local charity and volunteering groups.

A Member asked a question about the monitoring of the quality of care at Rosewood Court, Dunstable in the last year. The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing would provide a written answer.

A Member asked a question about the Modern Methods of Construction projects and had trial sites been identified.

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing advised that one of the first sites that had been identified as a potential pilot scheme was Houghton Regis.

Councillor Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills, reported on developments within his portfolio including:

- GCSE and A Level results, which due to the change in the grading system were now proving difficult to compare against previous results. A member briefing would be held in November to advise on results compared to neighbouring authorities;
- Fairfield Lower School, Stotfold, had received an award for School Governance;
- assessment of the implications of the latest fairer funding formula proposals;
- recruitment to the School Improvement team was underway;
- visits to potential sites for new build schools;
- an invitation to attend the site of the new school at Fairfield Park, Stotfold would be issued to Members. The project was a modular build.

A Member asked a question about building resilience and raising aspiration of pupils and asked when an update on the Partnership Vision would be available.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills advised that the Assistant Director for Education and Transformation was working on the Partnership Vision project and would be able to update Members at the appropriate stage.

C/17/34

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2016/17

The Council considered a report from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources that provided a review of Treasury Management activities for the year ended 31 March 2017, in compliance with relevant codes of practice adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED

that the Treasury Management and the Prudential Indicators' performance for the year ended 31 March 2017 be noted.

Upon being put to the vote 50 Members voted in favour of the resolution.

C/17/35 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (2016/17)

The Council received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 which summarised the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the last twelve months and anticipated activity in 2017/18.

RESOLVED

that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 be noted.

A Member asked a question about the number of web cast views of meetings and if this information could be included in the future Overview and Scrutiny annual report.

The Leader advised that the number of web cast views was monitored and that this could be included in future annual reports.

Upon being put to the vote 50 Members voted in favour of the resolution.

C/17/36 Motions

A notice of motion had been received from Councillor Jamieson:

"This Council is very concerned at the proposed levels of housing growth identified for Central Bedfordshire as a result of the change to standard methodology for calculating housing need set out in the 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' Consultation. This significant increase is not credible, places an unfair burden on Central Bedfordshire and is undeliverable. It undermines the Council and our communities' investment in our aspirations for Central Bedfordshire to plan growth effectively, including the necessary supporting infrastructure. We strongly urge Government to review the calculation for Central Bedfordshire and extend the transition period to enable Central Bedfordshire to submit its plan under the current numbers."

Council therefore authorises the Executive to take the appropriate steps to secure meaningful adjustments to the proposed methodology to address our concerns and calls on local MPs to lend their support in this endeavour."

In presenting the motion the Leader spoke about the work undertaken to manage growth in the best interests communities, whilst positively planning for jobs, homes, transport infrastructure and services.

The Leader referred to the consequences of a failure to plan positively that would leave Central Bedfordshire exposed to more imposed and unmanaged growth.

The motion was duly seconded by Councillor Young.

Upon being put to the vote 50 Members voted in favour of the motion.

C/17/37

Written Questions

A written question was received from Councillor D Lawrence as follows:

“Can I be assured that no further housing will be approved by this Council until adequate commitments are made by Central Government to the infrastructure of the A1 corridor in Central Bedfordshire.

Such commitments to include a new A1 at motorway status relieving the inadequate A1 current road, a transport hub in central Biggleswade with improved station facilities, car parking, bus terminal and a bridge over the railway south of Biggleswade and HGV ban in town centre.

These facilities are needed to meet the deficit of the past, the current consultation and any further expansion suggested by Central Government.

The costs are well beyond Local Government budgets and involve both Network Rail and The Highways Agency and thus a strong Local lobby is requested as any compromise would be failure to retain the quality of life for current residents.

Meanwhile can any plan to use CBC land assets outside approved boundaries be delayed for the allowed 2 years to allow it to become part of the consultation for the future and not set the wrong precedents for ruthless developers.”

The Executive Member for Regeneration referred to discussions with the Strategic Transport Forum which addressed concerns about infrastructure and a transport hub in Biggleswade. The Forum acknowledged that all stations in Central Bedfordshire lacked facilities, particularly disabled facilities.

The Executive Member for Regeneration assured that lobbying of the appropriate bodies would continue on obtaining transport infrastructure and that inappropriate development would be opposed in line with relevant planning policies.

C/17/38

Open Questions

The Chairman invited the Minority Group Leaders to ask a question each, prior to the consideration of questions that had been placed in the Open Questions receptacle.

1. Councillor Zerny asked a question about how many of the care homes in Central Bedfordshire were rated as ‘adequate’ or ‘Requires Improvement’.

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing advised that of 33 care homes in Central Bedfordshire, 8 were currently assessed as 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement', 3 'inadequate' and 5 rated as 'requires improvement'.

Councillor Zerny asked a supplementary question about Quality Care Control assessments and how the Council works to control care homes that are run by third parties.

The Executive Member for social Care and Housing spoke about visits to care homes and residents concerns about the care provided. Quality Care Control assessments can be effected by the staff availability when inspections take place.

2. Councillor Ryan asked a question about what strategies were in place to eliminate fly tipping.

The Executive Member for Community Services advised that there had been an increase in fly tipping and work was being undertaken with partners and landowners to target hot spots. Emphasis was also being placed on ensuring that the appropriate licence checks were in place when members of the public were paying for their waste to be disposed.

3. Councillor Goodchild asked a question about the closure of Rosewood Court care home and what steps were being taken to attract good quality care providers to the area.

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing spoke about the measures in place including occupancy rates, the quality of the recruitment process and diligence of feedback from residents.

4. Councillor Hegley asked a question about the number of house building completions and whether the target for the supply of affordable housing was being met.

The Executive Member for Regeneration summarised the number of houses that had been built in the first 3 months of 2017 and the financial pressures that effected the number.

Councillor Hegley referred to the increase in homelessness and the need for affordable housing.

5. Councillor Morris asked a question about illegal encampments and the level of support being provided to the Gypsy and Traveller Enforcement Officer.

The Executive Member for Community Services summarised the increased number of encampments in Central Bedfordshire and continued work with landowners, Town and Parish Councils and neighbouring authorities to reduce issues.

He referred to the work of the Gypsy and traveller Enforcement Officer and the pressures that the post faces and additional support that could be provided.

6. Councillor Lawrence asked a question about the level of support being provided to foster parents of teenage children.

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing referred to fostering events that she had recently attended to discuss the level of support they obtain. She referred to a range of different levels of support that was in place for foster parents.

7. Councillor Stay asked a question about the impact of illegal traveller encampments.

The Executive Member for Community Services advised on mechanisms in place to eliminate problems arising from illegal encampments.

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

Chairman

Dated