

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 14 September 2017.

PRESENT

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

Cllrs D Bowater
P Downing
Ms A M W Graham

Cllrs J Kane
K C Matthews

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Cllr M Liddiard
R Morris

Substitutes: Cllrs C C Gomm
N Warren

Members in Attendance: Cllrs B J Spurr Executive Member for
Health and Chairman of
the Health and Wellbeing
Board
B Wells Deputy Executive
Member for Community
Services
J N Young Executive Member for
Regeneration

Officers in Attendance: Ms A Bishop – Senior Engineer
Mr M Coiffait – Director of Community Services
Mr A Davie – Development Infrastructure Group
Manager
Mrs J Jones – Project Manager
Mrs J Keyte – Head of Community Safety
Mr P Mason – Head of Highways
Mrs R Preen – Scrutiny Policy Adviser

Others in Attendance Jonathan Glerum – Regional Flood Risk Manager
Allan Simpson – Strategic Growth Manager
Phil Skegg Operations Director, Ringway
Jacobs
Chris Goodacre Contracts Director, Ringway Jacobs

Public: 0

SCOSC/17/30 Members' Interests

None.

SCOSC/17/31 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that in order to accommodate external contributors to the meeting, item 12, the Review of the Highways Contract and Performance presentation would be delivered as the second agenda item.

SCOSC/17/32 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/17/33 Petitions

None.

SCOSC/17/34 Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

SCOSC/17/35 Call-In

None.

SCOSC/17/36 Requested Items

None.

SCOSC/17/37 Executive Members Updates

The Executive Member for Community Services provided a timeline for works to Dunstable Leisure Centre and informed the committee that a temporary contract provider was in place for one year during the tendering process to deliver additional classes at Houghton Regis Leisure Centre so as to ensure the continuation of services within the area.

The Deputy Executive Member for Community Services confirmed the timeline for the Thorn Turn development, the rationale behind the ongoing road closure and that full council use of the site was likely to be in January 2018.

The Executive Member for Regeneration confirmed that approximately 10,000 responses had been received following the Local Plan consultation with the next stage of the process, Regulation 19, commencing in early 2018. Members were informed of a restructure to senior posts within the directorate including those within planning and regeneration.

SCOSC/17/38 Partnership working with Anglian Water

The Sustainable Drainage Engineer provided Members with supporting information regarding the Council's approach to planning and flood risk management and the importance of the relationship with strategic partners. Representatives from Anglian Water (AW) then went on to deliver a presentation which set out their key challenges, approach to flood risk management, the costs associated with prevention and remedy and the future proofing of the service.

Members were advised of AW's role in the planning process, that residents were able to contact AW online to request comments on specific planning applications with AW's website setting out the process in detail. Engagement with strategic partners such as highways and development management was crucial and AW were lobbying to change the 'right to connect' legislation currently in favour of developers.

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

- Since AW's prior attendance at Scrutiny, communication and collaboration had improved with the Council.
- Concerns that conflicting information from AW was impacting developer contributions to planning applications.
- That historic issues raised in Moggerhanger had identified the water pressure was at expected levels. However, any future developments would have conditions applied in order to mitigate additional burdens on the system.
- The importance of ensuring customers received a cost effective and accessible service.
- Concerns at the lack of effective communication between AW and other strategic partners when works were scheduled and the subsequent disruption to customers.
- Methods of addressing problems in known flood risk areas with traditional procedures no longer suitable.

RECOMMENDED: -

- 1. That Council planning officers consult AW as part of the process for individual planning applications and strategic planning documents where the public sewerage system or other AW asset is concerned, or where there is a known history of flooding from the public sewerage system.**
- 2. That the Council and AW determine further actions required to improve the planning process, including; quality of AW responses, triggers for consulting AW and opportunity for automatic consultation, and training sessions between CBC and AW staff.**
- 3. That Local flood issues associated with AWs system be made known to the Council's Flood Risk Management Team so these may be considered for partnership funding under AMP7.**
- 4. That residents and individuals be encouraged to report flooding from a public sewer to AW so it may be recorded for further investigation.**

SCOSC/17/39 **Review of the Highways Contract and Performance**

The Assistant Director for Highways outlined details of performance and progress during the period the contractor, Ringway Jacobs (RJ) had been in place and the ongoing restructure within the team. Winter working would soon be underway and the Jet-patcher had been used extensively throughout the year in order to provide a temporary solution to repairing potholes.

Representatives from RJ provided Members details of key issues and challenges facing the organisation which included extended timescales for works, lack of information sharing, the need to demonstrate value for money, staff culture and quality of work. A period of staff readjustment had taken longer than anticipated, however management were confident long-term solutions were now in place. Robust targets and an improvement action plan were anticipated to yield accreditation in order to attract additional funding.

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

- Concerns regarding a lack of communication with Town and Parish Councils.
- That best practice models be researched and methods implemented where appropriate.
- That the new highways reporting system would allow for greater ease of logging defects, with the Member Portal assisting with communication and updates.
- The need for sub contractors to adhere to the same standards as those of RJ and the Council.
- The need for safety related defects to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.
- That funding would be made available for the team responsible for cleaning highways signs to continue.

RECOMMENDED that the committee acknowledge the improvements made to date, that challenges were being addressed and that a performance update on the improvement plan be delivered at a future meeting.

SCOSC/17/40 **Parking Strategy**

The Head of Community Safety provided Members with details of a recent public consultation, the results of which demonstrated the need for a focus on operational enforcement in the short to medium term, with measures anticipated to be implemented in April 2018. Proposals included a phased approach to a broader parking strategy in order that all elements coordinated with the Local Plan timeline, with short term measures anticipated to be implemented in April 2018

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

- Concerns regarding the loss of green spaces to accommodate parking, cognizant of the lack of available land.
- That alternative travel choices were limited in rural areas and so car use and parking was increasing.

- The need for a flexible policy which could be applied to meet the needs of individual areas and circumstances, including both urban and rural solutions.
- That additional staff resource was available, recognising the difficulties of recruiting Civil Enforcement Officers.
- The need for robust liaison and a collaborative approach with highways colleagues and the police.
- The importance of educating parents in relation to parking outside of schools.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee support the proposal to develop a Parking Strategy for Central Bedfordshire using a phased approach as follows:-

- 1. Phase One: Develop and agree a three-year Parking Management Strategy (2018- 2021)**
- 2. Phase Two: Planning Design Guide Review, Local Plan and LTP (4) completed**
- 3. Phase Three: Develop and agree a broader Central Bedfordshire Parking Strategy (2021-2035) aligned to the Local Plan and revised Planning Design Guide**

SCOSC/17/41 Work Programme 2017-18 and Executive Forward Plan

AGREED the Committee Work Programme subject to the following amendments: -

- **The Waste Collection Contract – 23 November 2017**
- **The All Age Skills Strategy – 11 January 2018**
- **Local Plan Consultation Responses – 15 March 2018**
- **Local Plan, Regulation 19 – 15 March 2018**