

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 23 August 2018

PRESENT

Cllr G Perham (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell
K C Matthews

Cllrs S Watkins
A Zerny

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs J G Jamieson
Mrs J G Lawrence
D J Lawrence
B J Spurr
N Warren
R D Wenham

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE (In place of Mrs J G Lawrence)
F Firth (In place of D J Lawrence)
E Ghent (In place of J G Jamieson)
A M Turner (In place of R D Wenham)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs A D Brown
K Ferguson
J N Young

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Dunleavy – Democratic Services Manager
Mrs C Jagusz – Committee Services Officer
Mr L Manning – Committee Services Officer
Ms K McFarlane – Business Investment Group Manager
Mr J Partridge – Head of Governance
Mr S Rix – Interim Monitoring Officer
Mrs C Shohet – Assistant Director of Public Health

GPC/18/11. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

GPC/18/12. **Members' Interests**

Item 7 Consultation on the Community Governance Review

It was noted that a number of the Members of the Committee were also a member of a town or parish council.

GPC/18/13. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced a variation to the order of business. Items 1 to 5 would be taken in order but items 8 and 9 (Central Area Growth Board Terms of Reference and Health and Wellbeing Board Membership) would be taken prior to Item 6 (Questions, Statements or Deputations) with Item 7 (Consultation on the Community Governance Review) following.

GPC/18/14. **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

GPC/18/15. **Central Area Growth Board Terms of Reference**

The Executive Member for Regeneration brought to the attention of the Committee a recent article posted on social media which referred to various bodies including the Central Area Growth Board and its terms of reference. He felt the article had been misleading as it suggested that membership of the Growth Board would mean major infrastructure decisions would be made undemocratically. The Executive Member reminded the Committee that the Central Area Growth Board would be composed of elected members from a number of district, unitary and county councils. He also pointed out that a number of other factual errors were contained within the article.

The Committee considered the report and Members noted the recommendation to include the Central Area Growth Board and its Terms of Reference in the Council's Constitution had been considered and supported by the Executive at its meeting on 7 August 2018. The Committee also noted that the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) was encouraging all local authorities within the growth corridor to strengthen structures for collaborative governance and collective decision making.

Points and comments were as follows:

- that the Growth Board would function as a Joint Committee but that no decision making powers would be ceded to it. All decisions would be made at and by the individual local authorities as part of their standard decision making process.

- the Committee was advised that the Council's representative would be the Executive Member for Regeneration and the agenda and minutes of the meetings would be within the public domain except for that relating to any exempt information as defined under the relevant legislation.
- concern was expressed that the proposed Central Area Growth Board arrangements would be undemocratic in nature and membership, and would result in Central Bedfordshire merely ratifying the decisions approved by the other constituent councils.
- it was emphasised that if Central Bedfordshire did not participate in the Growth Board other councils would be in the position to make decisions on its behalf.

The Committee noted that Central Bedfordshire Council was already engaging with the local councils on other matters and it was important to be involved in the Central Area Growth Board in order to be part of the decision-making process.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the proposed additions to the Constitution with regards to the Central Area Growth Board and its Terms of Reference be approved as set out at Appendices A and B to the minutes and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

GPC/18/16. **Health and Wellbeing Board Membership**

The Committee considered a report presented by the Assistant Director, Public Health proposing changes to the membership for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Committee were advised that the current membership had been in place since 2013 and had not undergone a review since that time. The proposed changes would expand the membership to include members from other provider organisations to better deliver the outcomes from the emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Committee noted that the recommended removal of a representative from the Commissioning Board from Herts and Midlands was necessary as this organisation no longer existed. Further, a representative from the successor body, NHS England, was unable to attend the Board on a regular basis and had not attended meetings for approximately 3-4 years. The Assistant Director, Public Health advised that other more effective routes existed for NHS England for the purposes of information and engagement.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the proposed changes to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in the report, be approved and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

GPC/18/17. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman invited the public speakers to make their statements in accordance with the Public Participation Scheme.

Consultation on the Community Governance Review

Clive Palmer, Town Councillor for Leighton-Linslade Town Council raised concerns over the boundary recommendation and the reduction of town councillors. He has spoken to many residents and it was felt that reducing the number of councillors would have no regard to the community.

Mark Soccaccio, Town Clerk for Leighton-Linslade Town Council stated that the Town Council seeks to address the consequences of these changes. He noted the difficulties which had arisen when trying to address the urban extension with Eggington Parish Council and, despite best efforts, no solutions have been agreed upon.

Ewan Wallace, Leader of Leighton-Linslade Town Council summarised that the Town Council had had a good election in 2015 and only needed a by-election recently when a councillor moved out of the area. He stated that building communities is important but community cohesion becomes difficult when neighbours pay different council tax.

Roger Clarke, Chairman for Totternhoe Parish Council, noted that the Parish Council had formed five sub-committees to manage increased workloads and that all councillors would be needed for this work. He also noted that with regards to boundaries, there are no financial implications to authorities as there are no properties currently on the land.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their comments.

GPC/18/18. **Consultation on the Community Governance Review**

The Committee considered a report that set out the outcomes of the consultation on the Community Governance Review.

The Committee had previously resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of the whole of Central Bedfordshire at its meeting on 26 October 2017. The review had commenced on 1 November 2017 and the Committee approved the stage 3 draft recommendations for publication on 29 March 2018.

The Committee was asked to consider the outcome of the Stage 3 draft recommendations consultation and to make final recommendations to Council accordingly.

As representatives from Leighton-Linslade Town Council and Totternhoe Parish Council were present for this item it was agreed by Committee to consider the outcomes relating to these Councils first.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. that the final recommendations for each town and parish council within Central Bedfordshire, as set out in the final recommendations (revised) at Appendix C to the minutes, be approved and adopted; and
2. that delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer to create any orders necessary for the implementation of those proposals which receive the support of Council (and any consequential matters thereby required).

GPC/18/19. **Work Programme**

The General Purposes Committee considered the Work Programme.

RESOLVED

that the General Purposes Committee Work Programme be amended as follows for the meeting on 25 October 2018:-

- proposed change to the Constitution on the Monitoring Officer function; and
- proposed change to the Director of Children's Services delegated power regarding the closure of schools.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.20 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated