

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 17 January 2019.

### PRESENT

Cllr Mrs C F Chapman MBE (Chairman)

Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	M C Blair	Cllrs	Mrs D B Gurney	Cllrs	I Shingler
	D Bowater		Ms C Hegley		P Smith
	J Chatterley		P Hollick		B J Spurr
	Mrs S Clark		J G Jamieson		R C Stay
	K M Collins		J Kane		Mrs T Stock
	I Dalgarno		D J Lawrence		T Swain
	S Dixon		Mrs J G Lawrence		G Tubb
	Mrs A L Dodwell		M Liddiard		A M Turner
	P Downing		K C Matthews		M A G Versallion
	P A Duckett		Ms C Maudlin		B Walker
	K Ferguson		D McVicar		N Warren
	F Firth		R Morris		S Watkins
	Mrs J Freeman		T Nicols		B Wells
	E Ghent		G Perham		R D Wenham
	C C Gomm		A Ryan		J N Young
	Mrs S A Goodchild		J A G Saunders		A Zerny
	Ms A M W Graham		D Shelvey		

### Apologies for Absence

Cllrs	Mrs A Barker	Cllrs	N B Costin	Cllrs	T Woodward
	R D Berry		K Janes		
	A D Brown		R W Johnstone		

Officers:	Mr R Carr	–	Chief Executive
	Mr M Coiffait	–	Director of Community Services
	Mr A Davie	–	Assistant Director Development and Infrastructure
	Mrs S Harrison	–	Director of Children's Services
	Mrs S Hobbs	–	Senior Committee Services Officer
	Mrs C Jagusz	–	Committee Services Officer
	Mrs J Ogley	–	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mr S Rix	–	Interim Monitoring Officer
	Mrs C Shohet	–	Assistant Director of Public Health
	Mr C Warboys	–	Director of Resources

C/18/56 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.**

C/18/57 **Members' Interests**

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in item 9a 'East West Rail Western Section (Phase 2) – Central Bedfordshire Council Formal Objection:

- Councillor Morris was Vice-Chair of Governors at Thomas Johnson Lower School, Lidlington
- Councillor Clark was an objector to the proposal in her role as a ward Councillor.

C/18/58 **Questions, Statements and Deputations**

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

**Local Plan – Lidlington**

Mr Booth, on behalf of Lidlington Action Group, spoke in relation to the proposed development for the Marston Vale area and Milton Keynes proposal to expand east of the M1. He sought clarification on the Planning Inspector's remit to amend the Local Plan and commented on the consultation process as he felt there had been no changes made to the Local Plan to take into account the responses to that consultation.

Ms Turner, on behalf of Lidlington Action Group, highlighted the impact that the proposed development in Marston Vale would have on a family living just outside Lidlington. She urged the Council to protect the rural areas of Central Bedfordshire and not allow an overdevelopment of the countryside.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that landscaped areas could not be considered in isolation and that the Council was required to take into account all the elements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council had invited the Planning Inspector to recommend modifications, if required. There had been extensive consultation on the Local Plan before it was submitted to the Planning Inspector. By having the Local Plan in place it would help protect Central Bedfordshire as the Council would have greater control over the quantity and quality of development in the area and it sought to prevent coalescence.

## **Aspley Woods – Dogs on Leads**

Mr Daly spoke about the decision by Bedford Estates to ban dogs from being let off the leads in Aspley Woods. He enquired whether the public funding supporting access and conservation was value for money, whether the Council would renegotiate or abandon the access agreement. He asked whether the Council would be making representations to the landowner.

The Executive Member for Community Services explained that Aspley Woods was privately-owned and the Council provided funding to Greensands Trust to manage public access to the woods. Without this funding the pathways, cycle and horse riding routes might not be open. The Council were going to enter into negotiations with Bedford Estates and the outcome of this would be shared with community groups using the woods.

## **Community Governance Review**

Mr Baker referred to the General Purposes Committee's decision to reject the proposal to reduce the number of councillors on Aspley Guise Parish Council. He was concerned that the Parish Council was proposing to raise its precept to fund objections to the Local Plan. He requested that Officers challenge the decision by the General Purposes Committee and reconsider the number of councillors on the Parish Council before the next election.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources advised that the Parish of Aspley Guise had 1789 electors and that 33 responses to the Governance Review had been received; 23 of these responses supported the reduction in the number of parish councillors.

All the responses had to be balanced against the response from the Parish Council. There would be an opportunity in May 2019 to hold a contested parish election as long as more nominations were received than seats on the Parish Council.

If there was concern about the conduct of a Parish Councillor, a complaint could be made to the Monitoring Officer. The Parish Council was entitled to raise its precept to any level as it felt appropriate.

Clarification would be sought from Officers as to whether the Parish Council could request a specific review, although this would not be done prior to the elections in May.

C/18/59

### **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

C/18/60

### **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

Item 14 'Motions' would be considered after item 11 'Independent Remuneration Panel'.

The Chairman congratulated Louise Purser, ASYE Assessor for being honoured with an MBE for her services to social work and social work education.

The Chairman's Civic Service would take place on 10 March 2019 at St Mary's Parish Church, Woburn.

The Chairman's activities had included attending:-

- Carol Services in the lead up to Christmas;
- the publication of the Annals of Dunstable Priory; and
- the annual award ceremonies for Community Services and Social Care, Health and Housing directorates.

C/18/61

### **Leader of the Council's Announcements and Communications**

Councillor Collins, Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, would continue with his current role as well as supporting the Executive Member for Regeneration.

The Council had been awarded Charter Status for Member Development.

C/18/62

### **Executive Member Presentations**

Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations highlighted some of the activities undertaken within her portfolio:

- modernising day care provision and the work undertaken at Silsoe Horticultural Centre;
- Splash Café, Bennetts Recreation Ground, Dunstable, where learning disability clients had the opportunity to help run the café for 10 weeks;
- the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing was the Vice President of ADASS (Directors of Adult Social Care) and would be taking on the role of national president later in the year;
- Priory View, Dunstable the independent living scheme;
- 93 empty homes had been brought back into accommodation;
- Cheering Volunteering; and
- the proposed Integrated Health and Social Care Hubs, Housing Development Company and improvements in Customer Services.

Councillor Young, Executive Member for Regeneration provided an update covering:

- the Local Plan – additional information had been submitted to the Planning Inspector from English Nature and Highways England. It was anticipated that the Examination in Public would take place in the Spring;
- 5-year land supply –979 dwellings had been completed in the first six months of 2018/19 and 1422 dwellings were under construction as at 30 September 2018;

- the High Street Improvement Scheme was due to be completed in January 2019; and
- the Council had been recognised by the Royal Town Planning Institute for its Technical and Skills Academy. The Academy would enable apprentices to be trained to become Planning Officers or Planning Technical Support Officers.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Regeneration explained that the Council's policy required 30% of a housing development to be affordable. This was not always possible on sites such as Land North of Houghton Regis where only 10% of the housing would be affordable, but instead this development had contributed towards the funding for the Woodside Link Road and the A5/M1 Link Road.

The Technical and Skills Academy would enable the Council to train their own staff.

C/18/63

### **Recommendations from the Executive**

The Council considered recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 4 December 2018.

#### **a) East West Rail Western Section (Phase 2) – Central Bedfordshire Council Formal Objection**

To seek approval to oppose the proposed 'Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order'.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. to oppose the proposed 'Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order' to the extent as set out in the Executive report, to allow the Council to present evidence verbally at the Public Inquiry, should current issues remain unresolved; and**
- 2. that the Council's Statement of Case at Appendix A to the Executive report be ratified.**

The decision was unanimous.

#### **b) Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018 – 2021**

To seek adoption of the Equality Action Plan 2018 – 2021.

#### **RESOLVED**

**that the Equality Action Plan 2018 – 2021 be adopted.**

The decision was unanimous.

**c) Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20**

To seek approval of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the current scheme be extended for a further year (2019/20), as set out in paragraph 21 in the Executive report; and**
- 2. that, as permitted by the new legislation:**
  - from 1 April 2019, a 100% premium be applied to homes that have been empty and substantially unfurnished for 2 years;**
  - from April 2020, a 200% premium be applied for homes that have been empty between 5 and 10 years; and**
  - from April 2021, a 300% premium be applied for homes empty for 10 years or more.**

The decision was unanimous.

C/18/64

**Recommendation from the General Purposes Committee**

The Council considered a recommendation from the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 13 December 2018 that sought adoption of the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved; and**
- 2. that, following approval and adoption, the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 be published on the Council's website with effect from 1 April 2019.**

The decision was unanimous.

C/18/65

**Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Council considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to the Scheme of Allowances for Members for 2019/20.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the existing Scheme of Allowances for Central Bedfordshire as recommended by the IRP for a period up to 12 months, as set out at Appendix C to the report, be approved; and**
- 2. that Part 6A of the Council's Constitution be updated accordingly.**

Upon being put to the vote 50 Members voted in favour, 2 voted against and no Members abstained.

C/18/66

### **Motions**

A notice of motion had been received from Councillor Zerny:

“In the interests of ensuring more members of the public can attend, this Council should have at least one meeting every year, of each committee, take place in the evening.”

In presenting the motion Councillor Zerny referred to the results from the Council's recent residents survey which indicated that the public felt that they could not influence the Council's decision-making.

The motion was duly seconded by Councillor Shingler.

In responding to the motion, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that the Chairman of each Committee had within their discretion the scope to move the start time and venue of a meeting if he/she felt it was appropriate. Moving the meetings to the evening could have an impact on older and disabled people as well as those reliant on public transport. There would also be an impact on staff, the costs of running a meeting would increase and Councillors could be prevented from attending Parish Council meetings.

Upon being put to the vote 5 Members voted in favour, 46 voted against and 1 Member abstained. The motion was therefore LOST.

C/18/67

### **Calendar of Meetings 2019 - 2021**

The Council considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

It was noted that the Induction Event schedule for 9 May 2019 would now take place on 13 May 2019.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the Calendar of Meetings for 2019/20 and 2020/21, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved subject to the above amendment.**

C/18/68 **Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel**

The Council received a report from the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel setting out the activities during the period May to December 2018.

**RESOLVED**

**that the report of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.**

C/18/69 **Written Questions**

No written questions were received.

C/18/70 **Open Questions**

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

- (1) Councillor Zerny asked about the Council's relative positioning compared to other Local Education Authorities, on A level results for children with special education needs and children from deprived families as at 2017.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that he would provide Councillor Zerny with a written response.

- (2) Councillor Ryan commented on the Key Stage 2 results in Houghton Regis and asked what the Council was doing to improve them.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the School Improvement Team were supporting schools and academies to improve the outcome of education, especially in the areas of greatest need.

- (3) Councillor Mrs Goodchild requested an update on the Troubled Families Programme and how the Council intended to support troubled families after the programme ceased in 2020. She also sought an analysis of the programme's impact.

The Executive Member for Children's Services was pleased that the Troubled Families Programme was producing good results. He advised that he would provide feedback to Members on the programme and he would provide Councillor Goodchild with a written response.

- (4) Councillor Maudlin wanted to know if preparations were being put in place in case the Department for Education decided to return the Sandye Place school site to the Council at the end of January.

The Executive Member for Children’s Services advised that the Secretary of State had made the decision to close the Academy. The Council was preparing and looking at the implications of the lease being surrendered to the Council. The normal process would be for the Department for Education (DfE) to retain the site for 10 years. It was the Council’s desire that the Department for Education surrender the lease and return the site back to the Council.

- (5) Councillor Maudlin sought reassurance that the leisure facilities in Sandy would remain.

The Executive Member for Community Services explained that a review of the leisure assets would be conducted in 2019. This would include assets in Sandy, including the facilities run by Sandy Town Council and those at Sandye Place Academy.

- (6) Councillor Mrs Goodchild requested an update on the refurbishment of the Red House, Houghton Regis.

The Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery explained that the building was part of the Housing Revenue Account stock. Survey work had been completed and it had been covered in plastic to prevent the building from deteriorating further. He would provide Councillor Mrs Goodchild with a timeframe for the works to be completed.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and concluded at 8.25 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....