

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 5 February 2019.

PRESENT

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)
Cllr R D Wenham (Vice-Chairman)

Executive Members:	Cllrs	S Dixon E Ghent Ms C Hegley	Cllrs	B J Spurr J N Young
Deputy Executive Members:	Cllrs	Mrs S Clark K M Collins Mrs A L Dodwell	Cllrs	Mrs T Stock B Wells
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	A D Brown I Dalgarno Ms C Maudlin G Tubb S Watkins		
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	R D Berry D Bowater J Chatterley P A Duckett K Ferguson F Firth	Cllrs	C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild Ms A M W Graham B Saunders M A G Versallion
Officers in Attendance		Mr R Carr Mr M Coiffait Mrs S Hobbs Ms K McFarlane Mrs J Ogley Mr S Rix Mrs C Shohet Mrs S Tyler Mr C Warboys		Chief Executive Director of Community Services Senior Committee Services Officer Assistant Director Business and Investment Director of Social Care, Health and Housing Interim Monitoring Officer Assistant Director of Public Health Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services Director of Resources

E/18/97

Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E/18/98 **Members' Interests**

Councillor Dixon declared an interest in items 27 and 31 'Saxon Leisure Centre, Biggleswade, Wet Changing Area Refurbishment' as he knew members of the Board of the proposed Contractor. He was not present in the Council Chamber whilst these items were discussed.

Councillor Hegley declared an interest in item 14 'Proposed Charges for Traded Services to Schools and Academies 2019/20' as she was a Governor at a school that used the traded services.

E/18/99 **Chairman's Announcements**

Work was due to commence on Houghton Regis Central on 25 February 2019.

E/18/100 **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted.

E/18/101 **Public Participation**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

E/18/102 **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

RESOLVED

that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 March 2019 to 29 February 2020 be noted.

E/18/103 **Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the proposed Budget for 2019/20 and updated the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the outcome of the public consultation. Members noted the statutory requirements relating to specific budget proposals, as set out in Appendix F.

The Executive Member introduced Appendix L which had been drawn up in response to the results of the public consultation.

Appendix L proposed to allocate additional funding towards:

- Community Safety
- Sustainable Transport
- Town Centre Ranger
- Community Councillor Fund
- Parking
- Countryside Access
- Culture

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to approve the Budget for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED

- 1. to note the consultation responses from Overview and Scrutiny, the public and stakeholders as set out in Appendices J and A(i) to the Executive report;**
- 2. to note the Council Tax Base as set out in Appendix H to the Executive report;**
- 3. to note that certain efficiency proposals identified in Appendix D(ii) would be subject to formal consultation and Equality Impact Assessment in the coming months and instruct the Corporate Management Team to propose alternative compensatory savings if it appears, following a review of the outcome of the consultation and Equality Impact Assessment, that any specific proposal cannot be delivered.**

RECOMMENDED to Council

- 1. that the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be approved;***
- 2. that in line with Government guidance, the following increases in Council tax (CBC element) for residents of Central Bedfordshire be approved:***
 - (a) a Band D increase of £14.86, representing a 1% increase on the charge for 2018/19; and***
 - (b) the CBC Band D Council Tax for 2019/20 will therefore be £1,500.64***
- 3. that the items set out in Appendix L to the Executive report be added to the Council's Budget for 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20 to 2022/23, noting that the use of previously identified funding streams does not necessitate any change to recommendation 2 above.***

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/104 **Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2022/23**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the proposed Capital Programme for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Capital Programme continued to feature some significant investments, including:

- New School Places
- M1/A6 Link Road
- Highways Structural Maintenance
- Integrated Health and Care Hubs in Dunstable and Biggleswade.

Reason for decision: To enable Council to consider the proposed Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/105 **Budget for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Business Plan)**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations setting out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Landlord Business Plan and the proposed Budget for 2019/20. The proposals:

- responded to legislative and Government policy changes, in particular the removal of the Debt Cap;
- made best use of the investment potential;
- mitigated pressures in the General Fund; and
- aligned to the debt strategy in the context of long term Business Planning and Investment.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources drew attention to recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Tenant Investment Panel.

Reason for decision: To enable Council to approve the budget for the HRA.

RESOLVED

to note the HRA's debt portfolio and interest payments due in 2018/19.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that the plans for additional borrowing of £35M over the MTFP period, to be used for building new affordable housing, be approved;***
2. ***that the recent legislative changes relating to Housing Finance and their impact on the Landlord Business Plan, be noted;***
3. ***that the Landlord Business Investment Plan, which proposes HRA investment throughout the Council area, be approved;***
4. ***that the HRA Revenue Budget for 2019/20 and the Landlord Business Plan Summary at Appendices A and B to the Executive report, be approved;***
5. ***that the 2019/20 to 2022/23 HRA Capital Programme at Appendix C to the Executive report, be approved; and***
6. ***that the average rent decrease of 1% for Council tenancies for 2019/20 in line with the national rental decrease as per Government legislation, be approved.***

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/106

Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Policy 2019-20

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and the Prudential Indicators for 2019/20. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendation from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To retain an effective treasury management framework for the Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2019/20, be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/107 **Capital Strategy 2019/20**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the Capital Strategy for 2019/20. The Capital Strategy would facilitate effective financial management and planning. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendation from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to have a Strategy that provided an effective capital framework for the Council that was underpinned by the principles of prudence, affordability and sustainability.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Capital Strategy for 2019/20 be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/108 **Investment Strategy 2019/20**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the Investment Strategy for 2019/20. The Investment Strategy would facilitate effective financial management and planning. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendation from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to have a Strategy that provided an effective investment framework for the Council that was underpinned by the principles of prudence, affordability and sustainability.

RECOMMENDED to Council

that the Investment Strategy for 2019/20 be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/109 **Proposed Charges for Traded Services to Schools and Academies 2019/20**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the revised charges for Traded Services to Schools and Academies for 2019/20. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendations from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to agree the revised charges for Traded Services to Schools and Academies for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- 1. that the charges for traded services to Schools and Academies 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the Executive report, be approved;**
- 2. that the charges for the new services to be introduced for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix B to the Executive report, be approved; and**
- 3. that the year on year price changes, as set out in Appendix C, and the volumetrics analysis for 2017/18 and 2018/19, set out in Appendix D to the Executive report, be noted.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/110

Social Care, Health and Housing Fees & Charges 2019/20

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources setting out the revised Social Care, Health and Housing fees and charges for 2019/20. The Executive Member drew attention to the recommendation from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations advised that she had made a commitment to investigate residents' concerns regarding the fees and charges that were over the inflation rate and where it was proposed that subsidies should be stopped.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to agree the fees and charges for 2019/20 as part of delivering a balanced budget for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDED to Council:

- 1. that the fees and charges prices for 2019/20, as set out in Appendices A and B to the Executive report, be approved; and**
- 2. that the new fees and charges for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix C to the Executive report, be approved.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/111

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Funding Review – Executive Response

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that responded to the outcomes of the scrutiny task force review into voluntary and community infrastructure funding in Central Bedfordshire.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to review the funding arrangements for the Voluntary and Community Sector.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the response of the Executive to the scrutiny task force recommendations contained at Appendix 1 be approved;**
- 2. to note that in parallel with the review of funding for the three Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure organisations, £69,000 had been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20;**
- 3. that the Scrutiny task force recommendation that a second phase of the review be undertaken, be approved;**
- 4. that the second phase be sponsored by the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, in place of a scrutiny task force;**
- 5. to request officers to prepare a Project Implementation Document (PID) to scope the parameters of the review, outline the timescale for completion and the resources and capacity required to undertake the review and set out a realistic timeframe for preparation of the PID;**
- 6. that the Director of Children's Services be authorised, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to approve the PID ensuring the Council's relationship with the entire Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) was in scope, exploring how the sector supports the delivery of the Council's statutory obligations, where there was leverage of external resources and grant income and where greater clarity might be required to ensure the sector could adapt to changing needs and future challenges; and**
- 7. that the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources be asked to nominate two Executive Members, and in consultation with the Chair of Corporate Resources OSC, two non-Executive Members to participate in the Phase 2 Review.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/112

Developing a Vision for Central Bedfordshire

The Executive considered a report from the Leader of the Council setting out the intention to develop a long-term vision for Central Bedfordshire as a place which will, in turn inform the Council's next 5-year plan and also provide a framework for future decision-making.

In response to a question, the Leader confirmed that community engagement would be held to inform the development of the vision.

Reason for decision: The development of a vision for Central Bedfordshire was deemed critical to shaping the future ambitions for the area and responds directly to the recommendations made through the Peer Challenge.

RESOLVED

that the development of a long-term (20+ years) Vision for Central Bedfordshire as a place, which would inform the Council's next strategic 5-year plan and provide a framework for future decision making, be endorsed.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/113

Biggleswade Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Forward Funding

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that sought approval for the submission of a bid, in the form of a Strategic Outline Business Case, to secure funding from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to support local infrastructure development and housing growth in Biggleswade.

Work was underway to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England by 22 March 2019.

Reason for decision: A successful outcome for the bid for funding would provide the potential to progress strategic housing sites in Biggleswade and be a catalyst for unlocking future growth but in a way which led to improvements for local residents.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the submission of a bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to assist in delivering infrastructure to support development in Biggleswade, be approved; and**
- 2. that the Director of Resources (s151 Officer) and the Director of Regeneration and Business be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Business, to agree the final contents of the submission.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/114 **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Health that outlined the main priorities of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2018-2023. The three main priorities the Strategy would focus on:

- driving change to improve mental health and wellbeing for people of all ages;
- enabling people to optimise their own health and wellbeing; and
- ensuring that growth delivers improvements in health and wellbeing for current and future residents.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Health confirmed that there would be engagement with young people.

Reason for Decision: To set out the priorities to deliver improved outcomes for residents.

RESOLVED

that the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023 which outlined why each priority had been identified, the actions required and the anticipated outcomes, be endorsed.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/115 **Schools for the Future – Commissioning New School Places in the ward of Leighton Buzzard North through the expansion of Gilbert Inglefield Academy and Vandyke Upper School for September 2020**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children that provided the outcome of the consultation undertaken by the governing body of:

- Gilbert Inglefield Academy to expand the school by 2 forms of entry (60 places in each year group) by September 2020; and
- Vandyke Upper School (academy) regarding the proposal to expand the school by 2 forms of entry (60 places in each year group) by September 2020.

Reason for decision: To ensure that local schools were provided for local children.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the new school places required in Leighton Buzzard be approved to meet the Council's statutory duty under The Education and Inspections Act 2006, by noting the positive responses received to the consultation by the governing bodies of Gilbert Inglefield Academy and Vandyke Upper School to the expansion of each school by 2 forms of entry (60 places in each year group) by September 2020; and**
- 2. that the Director of Children's Services be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children, to approve the capital expenditure as set out in the report. This was subject to approval of the proposals by the Department for Education, and subject to the granting of planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/116 Foster Carers Loan Scheme

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children setting out the scheme for the provision of an interest-free loan to adoptive/fostering households, who wished to extend or convert their homes in order to offer a wider range or number of placements to the children in care.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children confirmed that all the appropriate checks would be in place to ensure that the loan would be repaid back to the Council.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to have a scheme to allow carers to access loans for extensions and adaptations to their homes to support the Council in looking after the children in care.

RESOLVED

that the Foster Carers Loan Scheme be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/117 Public Consultation for a Draft Air Quality Action Plan

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Community Services that sought approval of the draft Air Quality Action Plan for public consultation. Monitoring of air quality had shown concentrations of nitrogen dioxide to be exceeding the Air Quality Objectives in Amptill town centre and Sandy (adjacent to the A1).

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations in carrying out a public consultation on the draft Air Quality Action Plan and adopts a robust Plan to reduce key air pollutant concentrations in accordance with statutory requirements under the current Air Quality Framework.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the Director of Community Services be authorised to commence a public consultation regarding the Draft Air Quality Action Plan, as set out in Appendix A to the report, to ensure that Members, residents/businesses, relevant agencies/organisations and statutory consultees are consulted on the proposals; and**
- 2. to request the Director of Community Services to report the outcome of the consultation to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a finalised Air Quality Action Plan for review and comment, before being approved by the Executive Member for Community Services. The Air Quality Action Plan would make specific reference to existing declared Air Quality Management Areas in Sandy and Ampthill.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/118

Establishing a Council Owned Housing Company

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery setting out the rationale for the creation of a wholly owned housing company. This was part of a proactive approach to increase and influence the supply of new homes in order to help address the shortfall between demand for and supply of new affordable homes:

- in absolute terms as viability issues have resulted in below policy delivery; and
- in specific tenures, particularly in the provision of affordable rental housing, older people's housing and specialist accessible housing.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery explained that each potential development would be considered in line with the current mechanisms, set out in the Constitution and financial regulations. This could either be through delegated powers or via a report to the Executive for disposals over £500k. A list of potential sites was being explored and would be submitted to the Executive for consideration.

There were a number of key risks in setting up a wholly owned company but these had been considered and there was a strong financial model and business case. The Council would provide equity in return for shares in the Company and then the Company would pay a dividend to the Council in return for this once it had become profitable.

Appropriate governance arrangements would be put in place to enable a clear decision-making framework. It was recommended that a Company Board be set up to include an independent Chair, four Council representatives (two Councillors and two senior officers) and a Managing Director of the Company.

Reason for decision: To set out the rationale for establishing a wholly owned housing company to develop and retain housing using the Council's land assets where this was the most appropriate option for use of that land.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the creation of a housing company, limited by shares and wholly owned by the Council be approved, with the overarching aim of increasing housing supply in Central Bedfordshire be approved through:**
 - **the development of sites owned by the Council; and**
 - **the creation and, where appropriate, retention by the Company, of housing stock with a range of tenures that address gaps in the market not met by either the private sector or through development within the HRA**
- 2. that the proposed governance arrangements for the Company, as set out in paragraphs 44 to 47 in the report, be approved;**
- 3. that the Director of Community Services be authorised, in consultation with the Council's Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Monitoring Officer and a reference group consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations and Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery to set up an appropriate company structure, including;**
 - (a) commencement of the incorporation of the Company and selection of the name of the Company in order to do so.**
 - (b) approval of the type of company, the articles of the company and the composition of the Board.**
 - (c) appointment of the Directors and Company Secretary of the Company.**
 - (d) approval of a Shareholders' Agreement to be entered into between the Company and the Council.**
 - (e) ensuring that the Company will hold appropriate insurances and/or benefit from the insurances that the Council holds**
- 4. that the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources be authorised to take decisions on the exercise of shareholder powers in the Company;**

5. **that the Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, and in line with the Council's Treasury Management Policy, to agree the terms of a £250,000 loan to be made by the Council to the Company to fund set up costs and provide initial working capital; and**
6. **that the Director of Resources be authorised to determine prices, in agreement with the Company, for any services provided by the Council for the Company.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/119 **Housing Delivery Clause Technical Note**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration setting out a guidance note on the delivery rates within Section 106 legal agreements to ensure the expedient delivery of new homes.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Regeneration advised that he would liaise with the Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations to enable residents to access the data on the number of completions for delivery.

Reason for decision: To prevent the risk of the Council being challenged if it sought to secure delivery rates through Section 106 with no endorsed up to date planning guidance to support the approach.

RESOLVED

1. **that the Housing Delivery Clause Technical Note be endorsed as planning guidance for Development Management purposes; and**
2. **that the Director of Regeneration and Business be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any minor amendments to the Housing Delivery Clause Technical Guidance Note.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/120 **Community Safety Resources**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Community Services that sought agreement for additional frontline community safety resources to enable the Council to respond proactively to residents' community safety concerns. The Residents Survey and the Community Safety Survey carried out by the Council and the Community Safety Partnership had indicated that residents in Central Bedfordshire felt less safe than they did in 2016.

The Deputy Executive Member for Community Services drew attention to the recommendation from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In response to questions, the Director of Community Services confirmed that this would be an additional 12 Council employees that would look at enforcement and community engagement, including engagement with ward Councillors, to gain an understanding of local community needs.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to make a tangible difference to community safety and address residents' concerns.

RESOLVED

that the additional community safety resources, as set out in the report, be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/121

Future Use of the Houghton Lodge Site, Ampthill

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery setting out a proposed direction on the future of the Houghton Lodge site in Ampthill.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to redevelop the Houghton Lodge site in Ampthill.

RESOLVED

that the future use of the Houghton Lodge Site, Ampthill be approved based on:

- **a scheme to deliver high-quality downsizer accommodation for older people on the site;**
- **the exploration of other sites where the Council is intervening in the housing market, to consider the overall provision of affordable housing in the area; and**
- **the demolition of buildings on site once it is vacated to mitigate revenue expenditure and minimise opportunities for unauthorised use.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/122 **Saxon Leisure Centre, Biggleswade, Wet Changing Area Refurbishment**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery that sought approval to award the contract for the refurbishment of the wet changing area at Saxon Leisure Centre, Biggleswade to Contractor A.

Reason for decision: To award the contract to refurbish the wet change area at Saxon Leisure Centre as it had come to the end of its life cycle and needed to be replaced.

RESOLVED

that the award of the refurbishment of the wet changing area at Saxon Leisure Centre to Contractor A, as detailed in exempt Appendix 1, be approved subject to approval of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in February 2019.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/123 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that its consideration was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

E/18/124 **Proposed Charges to Traded Services to Schools and Academies 2019/20**

Minute E/18/124 related to exempt business. See minute E/18/109.

E/18/125 **Establishing a Council Owned Housing Company**

Minute E/18/125 related to exempt business. See minute E/18/118.

E/18/126 **Saxon Leisure Centre, Biggleswade Wet Changing Area Refurbishment**

RESOLVED

to note that the award of the contract to Contractor A would be via the SCAPE framework.

The decision was unanimous.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.28 a.m. and concluded at 11.35 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated

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