

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at the Dunstable Community Fire Station, Dunstable, on Tuesday, 17 March 2009.

Present:

Councillors:

Costin (Chairman)
Mrs Hegley
McVicar
Nicols

Councillors:

Penman
Rawcliffe
Spurr
Mrs Staples

Others in attendance: Councillor Snelling

Officers attending: Mr Ruddick, Ms Malarky, Ms Stevens, Mr Armstrong, Mr Carlisle, Mr Emerton, Mrs Hobbs, Ms Hulks, Mrs Rooker and Mr Young

78. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 January 2009 as a correct record and to authorise the Chairman to sign them, subject to the inclusion of Mr Emerton being in attendance.

79. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

80. QUESTIONS UNDER EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULE 2.3 (iv)

None.

81. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Nicols advised Members that the Council had been requested to take an active role in the City Regional Submission. Luton and Central Bedfordshire would be supporting the Department of Communities and Local Government.

82. MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE 2008-2009

Members received a performance report setting the overall position for the year to date. Appendix A to the report detailed performance in quarter three against targets set out in the 2008 Council Plan for our priorities for action and heartbeat indicators, including a number of key financial indicators.

Members received a presentation that gave an overview of the Council Plan 2008/09 and the key areas under each ambition. The Council Plan agreed in June 2008, set out 13 priorities for action under the Council's control whereby six exceeded/met the target and seven had just missed the target. At the end of quarter two the South Bedfordshire District's overall performance was amber.

Quarter three budget monitoring outlined the General Fund overspend reported in quarter two of £159k had been contained and a contribution to reserves of £209k would be possible. The Council had been able to contain the impact of the current economic downturn with no impact on current service delivery. There had been no adverse matters that needed reporting for the Housing Revenue Account and capital programme.

Members were advised that the work programmes that were no longer directly under the Council's control would be taken forward by Central Bedfordshire teams. Where this was the case the performance management system had classified these accordingly and their progress would not affect the overall South Bedfordshire performance outcome against the relevant PFA and Ambition.

The reason for resolving the following was to ensure the Council continued to closely monitor council priorities and its performance and effectively managed the transition process.

NOTED the performance in relation to targets and milestones as set out in the 2008 Council Plan.

83. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2008/09

The Executive received a report which enabled Members to review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to its inclusion in the 2008/09 Statement of Accounts. The Audit Committee would consider the Statement on 19 March 2009 and be referred to Central Bedfordshire before being published. The 2008/09 Statement of Accounts would be produced by Central Bedfordshire following the Council's demise on 31 March 2009.

The reason for resolving the following was to begin the process whereby the Annual Governance Statement would be published via the annual statement of accounts for 2008/09.

RESOLVED

- 1) that the Annual Governance Statement as set out at Appendix A to the report be approved
- 2) that the Annual Governance Statement for 2008/09 be referred to the Audit Committee for consideration and approval for inclusion within the 2008/09 Statement of Accounts for South Bedfordshire District Council.

84. SUNDRY DEBTOR ACCOUNTS – UNCOLLECTABLE ARREARS

The Executive received a report that sought Members approval for the write-off of uncollectible arrears of the sundry debts detailed in the report.

The report was set out into two parts, the first part was the total of delegated write-offs that had been authorised by the Corporate Service Manager (Business Services) and Corporate Service Manager (Legal and Democratic). The second part sought Members approval to write-off the eight cases that were over £2,500 which totalled £70,626.21.

Members discussed the reliability of the guarantors and suggested that the guarantors' financial situation be reviewed at regular intervals.

NOTED that the delegated write-off of sundry debts tabled in section 3.0 of the report.

RESOLVED to authorise the write-off of uncollectible sundry debts over £2,500 as set out in section 4.0 of the report.

85. HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

The Executive sought Members approval to authorise the write-off of the Housing Benefit accounts listed in the report that were in excess of £2,500.00. These accounts had undergone the normal channels of recovery and were deemed to be irrecoverable. Members noted that if at any time the whereabouts of the claimants became known to the Council, the debt would be written back on and pursued.

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The reason for resolving the following was that the sum of £48,540.84 consisting of 13 accounts detailed in Appendices A and B to the report, each of which exceeded the sum of £2,500.00 allowed for delegated authority.

RESOLVED to authorise the writing off of 13 irrecoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments outlined in the report.

86. KITCHEN, BATHROOM AND LEVEL ACCESS REFURBISHMENT CONTRACT FOR 2009/10

The Executive received a report that informed Members of the procurement status of the new Decent Homes Contract 2009/10 and to extend the current contracts.

The reason for resolving the following was that new contracts for kitchens, bathrooms, level access refurbishment and re-roofing were out for tender and would be evaluated and awarded in April 2009 with a start on site date sometime during May 2009. The two existing contracts for kitchens, bathrooms and level access refurbishment were due for completion on 31 March 2009. Extending the contracts outside of the term would enable the Council to continue with its Decent Homes work, until the new contract was awarded. The existing re-roofing contract did not require an extension as the works had been completed.

RESOLVED that the existing contracts be extended up to a maximum of six months.

87. MINUTES OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2008

The Executive received and considered the minutes for the Houghton Regis Town Centre Management Committee held on 27 November 2008.

Councillors Mrs Staples advised Members that it had been a pleasure serving on the HRTCMC. She had attended several site visits to the refurbishment of Bedford Square, Houghton Regis and it was an exciting time to look forward to.

88. MINUTES OF THE DUNSTABLE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2008

The Executive received and considered the minutes for the Dunstable Town Centre Management Committee held on 9 December 2008.

Councillor McVicar advised Members that improvements to the Town Centre was being considered as part of the Masterplan. He had attended a meeting where representative from the Highways Agency, Department for Transport, East of England Development Agency etc attended to highlight the need for the Northern Dunstable Bypass.

In a response to a query Councillor McVicar advised Members that the Town Centre Management Committees would continue the same arrangements that were currently in place with South Bedfordshire District Council whereby the minutes from these meetings would be submitted to the Central Bedfordshire Executive. Members discussed the provision of a budget for the Town Centre Management Committees and requested that clarity be sought as to whether this would still be available after 1 April 2009.

Members also discussed the request from Leighton Linlade Town Council for funding to support the Borrowers' Centre. The Executive had supported the principle of releasing revenue reserves of £15,000, subject to previous concerns expressed at the meeting on 19 August 2008 and a business case demonstrating a viable project. Members were made aware that a business case had not been forthcoming. Members were advised that the legalities of using the Borrowers name was being considered and a brochure was being produced about how the name would be protected, which the Town Council needed funding for. The Executive agreed that the above concerns needed to be addressed before any revenue could be released.

NOTED the minutes of the Dunstable Town Centre Management Committee held on 9 December 2008.

89. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business which contained exempt information as defined in Section 100 (1) of the local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

90. FORMER LEASEHOLDER'S ARREARS – WRITE OFF

Exempt Paragraph 3

The Executive received a report that sought Members approval to write-off a former leaseholder's arrears, which had been identified as irrecoverable.

The reason for resolving the write-off was that the debt had been accepted in return for the surrender of the leaseholder's lease, and exceeded the sum allowed for delegated authority.

RESOLVED to authorise the write-off of the leaseholder debts, as set out in paragraph 4.0 in the report.

91. TRICO – CREASEY PARK COMMUNITY FOOTBALL PROJECT

Exempt Paragraph 3

The Executive received a report that sought Members approval to waive standing orders and financial regulations in order to appoint an architect to undertake the remaining design work and to project manage the Creasey Park Community Football project.

The reason for resolving the following was to enable the project to proceed in what was considered the most appropriate way recognising the many and carried competing demands on Central Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED that the Strategic Director be authorised to appoint AND Architects to provide professional services in accordance with RIBA conditions E to L for second Phase of Creasey Park Community Football project and to provide the overall onsite project management, and such appointment to be conditional on Central Bedfordshire Council providing the necessary capital funding to enable the scheme to proceed.

As it was the last meeting of the South Bedfordshire District Council Executive the Leader of the Council thanked Members (including the opposition Members) and Officers for taking part and for their contribution to the Executive. The Executive had worked well as a team and it was why South Bedfordshire was moving forward in a strong position.

CHAIRMAN