At a meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford on Tuesday 20 August 2019, 9:30 AM — 10:47 AM

Present:

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

Executive Members:

Cllrs  S Clark  Cllrs  E Ghent
K Collins  Cllrs  C Hegley
S Dixon  T Stock
I Dalgarno  N Young

Deputy Executive Members:

Cllrs  A Dodwell
Spurr  Cllr  Watkins

Apologies:

None

Absent:

None

Members in Attendance:

Cllrs  R Berry  Cllrs  S Goodchild
D Bowater  C Gomm
N Bunyan  A Graham
M Blair  D McVicar
S Collins  B Saunders
P Duckett  P Snelling
F Firth

Officers in Attendance:

Mr R Carr  Chief Executive
Mr M Coiffait  Director of Community Services
Mr A Davie  Assistant Director Development & Infrastructure
Mr D Galvin  Assistant Director Finance
Mrs S Hobbs  Senior Committee Services Officer
Mrs J Ogley  Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Mr S Rix  Monitoring Officer
Mrs M Scott  Director of Public Health
Mrs S Tyler  Assistant Director Children’s Services Business and Supporting Services

1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
2. **Members’ Interests**

Councillor Hegley declared an interest in item 9 ‘Schools for the Future – Commissioning of New School Places in the ward of Tithe Farm, through the Expansion of Thornhill Primary School, Houghton Regis for September 2021’ as she knew the Head Teacher at Thornhill Primary School. She was present in the Council Chamber whilst this item was being discussed but did not vote on the item.

3. **Chairman’s Announcements and Communication**

Luton and Dunstable Hospital had received capital funding of £99.5M towards the upgrading of its facilities. This would enable the hospital to undertake major improvements and would facilitate the merger with Bedford Hospital, enhancing the health care in the area.

The Housing Infrastructure Fund bid for Biggleswade had been successful. This funding would be used to build a new secondary school, to improve Lindsell Crossing and expand power supply in the area.

Abbotsbury Care Home had received an outstanding rating following its recent CQC Inspection.

4. **Petitions**

Mr Watson presented a petition, containing 41 signatures, concerning the enforcement of parking restrictions in Poplar Close, Leighton Buzzard. Mr Watson highlighted the problems caused by inappropriate parking by parents delivering and collecting children to and from Dovery Down Lower School. A No Waiting Order was in place but was not being enforced.

The Executive Member for Highways Delivery and Innovation explained that Poplar Close was in a controlled zone. He agreed to check the Council’s Policy regarding the dispensation of the waiting period, request that the signage in Poplar Close be improved and liaise with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to enlist the help of the school. Item 8 on the Agenda set out an Interim Parking Management Strategy which if approved would help manage parking issues across Central Bedfordshire. Councillor Spurr, the Ward Member, had arranged for the Enforcement Team and the Police to attend Poplar Close during the first week of the new school term to try to alleviate the problems.

5. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

**Traffic Issues in Sandy**

Mr Allen referred to the Traffic Management Meeting in March 2012 where the Executive Member had considered letters from residents in Sandy seeking improvements to New Road and Station Road, Sandy.
It had been agreed at the Traffic Management Meeting that Ward Members and Sandy Town Councillors would be encouraged to give appropriate priority to the requests contained in the letters in the next version of the Local Area Transport Plan (LATP). In 2016 the Council decided not to produce another LATP. It was unclear as to why speed humps and a pedestrian crossing would be installed in Willow Rise, Sandy. He contended that a bypass was needed between Baldock and Alconbury. A petition containing over 2,300 signatures had recently been presented to Alistair Burt, MP calling for Highways England and the Council to work together to improve the road network and its physical condition in the Sandy area.

The Executive Member for Community Services agreed to investigate the issues raised by Mr Allen and would meet with him directly. The current LATP was a valid document as it covered the period up until March 2026.

The Leader, along with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and the Executive Member for Highways Delivery and Innovation, had been lobbying for the realignment of the A1. The Leader would be raising this issue with the new Transport Minister.

6. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

RESOLVED

that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 be noted.

7. Interim Parking Management Strategy

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Highways Delivery and Innovation that set out the proposed Interim Parking Management Strategy. The Strategy was designed to be an interim operational three-year plan that responded to issues of concern to residents identified through public consultation.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that different parking solutions were needed to respond to the different requirements of the rural and urban areas. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cars were not used due to the Government’s decision not allow Penalty Notices to be issued when there was nobody present at the car.

Reason for decision: To provide a clear, consistent and transparent guidance and criteria as to how it would respond to service requests of most concern to residents.

RESOLVED

that the Interim Parking Management Strategy be adopted.

The decision was unanimous.
8. **Schools for the Future – Commissioning of New School Places in the ward of Tithe Farm, through the Expansion of Thornhill Primary School, Houghton Regis for September 2021**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children that set out the outcome of the preliminary and statutory consultations undertaken on the proposal to expand Thornhill Primary School, Houghton Regis by 2 forms of entry (60 places in each year group) by September 2021.

The Executive Member for Families, Education and Children clarified that paragraphs 8 and 14 in the report referred to land at Houghton Regis North 1, known as Linmere. The 7,055 homes referred to in the report took into account the development in both Houghton Regis North 1 and 2.

Reason for decision: The forecast for new school places in the Houghton Regis cluster area showed a deficit of school places to meet the basic need going forward. Without additional places, children from the Linmere area development and local children may not be able to access a local school.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the new school places required in Houghton Regis, to meet the Council’s statutory duty under The Education and Inspection Act 2006, be delivered by expanding Thornhill Primary School, Houghton Regis to 2 forms of entry (60 places in each year group) by September 2021; and

2. to authorise the Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children, to approve the commencement of capital expenditure, as set out in the report, subject to the granting of planning permissions under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Upon being put to the vote 9 Members voted in favour and Councillor Hegley did not vote having declared an interest.

9. **Proposal for Increased Total Capacity for Ivel Valley Community Special School, Biggleswade**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children that set out the outcome of the preliminary and statutory consultations undertaken on the proposal to increase the total capacity of Ivel Valley Community Special School, Biggleswade from 170 to 200 places for September 2019.

Reason for decision: There was a shortage of places in special schools both locally and nationally. By increasing the number of places at Ivel Valley School it would allow a number of children access to the specialist provision.
RESOLVED

that the increase in capacity from 170 to 200 places at Ivel Valley Community Special School, Biggleswade for September 2019 be approved.

The decision was unanimous.

10. **Community Grant Schemes**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing and Communities that sought approval to launch, on a trial basis, two community grant schemes. The schemes would provide Ward Councillors with the financial means to make a difference in their communities by supporting projects and groups in their areas through the allocation of grant funding. Each Ward Councillor would be allocated a balance of £2,000 for the year to support activities in their communities. The report also proposed an approach for the development of a public realm improvement scheme.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing and Communities explained that the scheme would be launched following approval of the governance arrangements by the General Purposes Committee and Council in September 2019. The decision to support a project/group with a grant would lie with the Ward Councillor and once an application had been submitted it would be logged and checked by Officers.

In response to a question, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that the schemes would be monitored appropriately.

**Reason for decision:** To enable funding to be distributed as community grants to empower Ward Councillors as community leaders and to enable communities to meet their aspirations through local community action.

RESOLVED

1. that the Ward Councillor Grant Scheme and Community Assets Grant Scheme, as described in the report, be approved and progressed to launch the two pilot schemes in October 2019; and

2. that the approach and process to shape the Public Realm Improvement Scheme, also on a pilot basis, be noted.

The decision was unanimous.

11. **Construction Code of Practice**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration that sought approval of the Construction Code of Practice as technical planning guidance.
In response to a question, the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration confirmed that the Code would be applied by the Development Management Committee.

Reason for decision: If the code was not endorsed for development management purposes, given current and future levels of growth in Central Bedfordshire, it was probable that there would be an increased likelihood of disruption to residents living near to construction sites and the adoption of this Code by developers will be the start of a culture change by those undertaking developments in Central Bedfordshire to minimise disruption.

RESOLVED

1. that the Construction Code of Practice be endorsed as technical planning guidance for Development Management purposes; and

2. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration, to make any minor amendments to the Construction Code of Practice.

The decision was unanimous.


The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Community Services that sought approval of Phase 1 of the new Highway Construction Standards & Specifications Guidance to assist and inform developers of the Council’s highway requirements for technical submissions under Sections 38 and 278 of the Highways Act 1980.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Community Services explained that shared surfaces could cause problems for some disable people and that tactile surfaces would be used to aid blind or partially-sighted people. The minimum road width was 6 metres and he would be looking at better road designs. The new guidance would contribute to improving safety for users and reduce the maintenance liability.

Reason for decision: The guidance would inform all parties (internal and external) involved in development work of the Council’s minimum highway design requirements and preferred styles, together with a clear understanding of the full process from planning approval to adoption of roads by the Council.

RESOLVED

1. that Phase 1 of the Highway Construction Standards & Specifications Guidance be adopted; and
2. to authorise the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Services, to approve minor amendments to the Highway Construction Standards & Specifications Guidance.

The decision was unanimous.

13. Public Space Protection Orders

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Community Services that set out a proposal for a new Public Space Protection Order to replace the existing Alcohol-Free Zones and Dog Control Orders.

Reason for decision: A new Public Space Protection Order was required as the existing orders were due to expire in October 2020.

RESOLVED

that the Public Space Protection Order proposal be approved for the purposes of a 12-week public consultation.

The decision was unanimous.

14. Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (including the Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account)

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the formal process for the 2020/21 – 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan. The report also considered the impact of changes in Local Government financing and how these might be addressed, leading to the setting of a budget and Council Tax rate for 2020/21 in February 2020.

Reason for decision: To put in place a framework to meet the financial challenges faced by Central Bedfordshire Council over the medium term.

RESOLVED

1. that the proposed framework for the updating of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2023/24 and the preparation of a budget for 2020/21 be endorsed; and

2. that the approach to the consultation process for 2019/20 be approved.

The decision was unanimous.
15. Purchase of Transitional Accommodation

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations, the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery and the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that sought approval to purchase residential accommodation identified in the exempt appendices via the Housing Revenue Account.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to provide transitional accommodation to homeless applicants who appear to have a priority need when they approach the Council.

RESOLVED

1. that the acquisition of the freehold properties identified in exempt Appendices A and C be approved; and

2. to authorise the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to approve all necessary legal documentation relating to the transaction and their execution.

The decision was unanimous.

16. Quarter 1 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the forecast outturn position as at June 2019.

In response to a question, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources explained that the income raised through fees and charges for Adult Social Care helped offset costs and that work was being undertaken to mitigate the pressures further.

Reason for decision: To facilitate effective financial management and planning.

RESOLVED

1. that the revenue forecast outturn position of an underspend of £0.6M (after the release of the budgeted contingency), be noted;

2. to request officers to continue to take the necessary action to deliver a balanced budget, avoiding the need to draw on the budgeted contingency so far as possible; and
3. that the split of the 2019/20 Social Care Grant received towards the latter part of last year’s Medium Term Financial Plan process be approved. The Grant was £1.479M and the proposed split be £0.986M for Adults Social Care and £0.493M for Children’s Services. Note the Grant covered both adult and children’s social care with the allocation left to the discretion of the receiving Council.

The decision was unanimous.

17. Quarter 1 Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the capital forecast outturn position as at June 2019.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery explained that the slippage on the replacement care home in Leighton Buzzard was due to the current consultation.

Reason for decision: To facilitate effective financial management and planning.

RESOLVED

1. that the capital gross forecast position was a spend of £115.7M (£80.2M in 2018/19), demonstrating the continued significant capital investment made by Central Bedfordshire to support its community; and

2. to note that the schemes in the recommendation below would be accommodated by the forecast slippage on other schemes, such that there is no additional revenue pressure from doing so.

RECOMMENDED to Council

to increase the 2019/20 Capital Programme by £2.0M (£1.0M for Highways Innovation and £1.0M for Footpaths and Cycleways) as announced by the Leader at the Annual Council meeting. Both to be subject to the normal outline and detailed business case process.

The decision was unanimous.

18. Quarter 1 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring 2019/20

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the HRA projected outturn for the revenue and capital position as at June 2019.

Reason for decision: To facilitate effective financial management and planning.
RESOLVED

1. that the revenue forecast of a balanced budget with a contribution to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves of £4.398M, be noted thus strengthening the Council's ability to invest and improve its stock of Council Houses;

2. that the capital forecast position indicates a net outturn of £33.977M, representing an underspend against budget of £9.885M, with proposals for slippage of £9.485M; and

3. that Right to Buy sales be monitored for the possible impact on predicted surpluses in the medium to longer term.

The decision was unanimous.

19. Purchase of Transitional Accommodation

Minute 19 related to exempt business. See minute 15 above.

Chairman ..............................................

Dated ....................................................