

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2008**

PRESENT

Mr. Wren presided over Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Mackin.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. Reddick and Mr. Dear.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. INFORMATION FROM LEADER & DEPUTY LEADER MBDC – RE 'UNITATRY'

The committee has received further information from the Secretary of State via the above regarding the Government's decision on the Unitary bid. In July last year the Secretary of State announced that she was 'minded' to implement a Bedford Borough unitary council thus making a second unitary council – Central Bedfordshire – essential. It is understood that every contact the D C has had with the Secretary of State's ministerial team have made it clear that this 'minded to' decision is by far the most likely to become the final decision. The current timetable should enable the Secretary of State to make a final decision by the end of February 2008.

4. SAMPLE OF HIGHWAYS REPORT – BEDS C C

A sample of the intended Highways Report has been received by the committee. The content and layout of the report was discussed and it was agreed that it gave far more information with a much improved format.

5. RESPONSE FROM BEDS C C RE GRESHAM WAY PARKING SITUATION

Two responses have been received from the County Council's Highways Department regarding the Gresham Way resident's petition concerning the parking situation in that road. The first response states that the petition has been passed to the Traffic and Safety Manager who will reply to the resident's concerns in due course. The second response states the petition has been forwarded to Bedfordshire Highways consultants who will assess the request and formulate a report that will be presented to the Development Control Committee in due course.

6. PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

The December play area reports have been received from the contractor and all issues requiring attention were noted. It was agreed to replace the litter bin at the STMA and the clerk is to contact the contractor accordingly. The litter bin at The Meads has been used as a dog litter bin. The Dog Warden is to be contacted as dogs are not allowed in that area. Molehills have now appeared at the St. Michel's play area and the see-saw at the STMA has been removed to the contractor's premises for safety as it requires new parts from the manufacturer.

7. HIGHWAYS – ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SURVEY

Mrs. Harrison has received a questionnaire from the County Council requesting the committee's views on their performance regarding the quality of highway repairs and other related matters. The questions were discussed at length and appropriate answers given prior to Mrs. Harrison returning the questionnaire to the County Council.

8. CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES FUND

The final decision has now been made as to which of the options the Town Council has chosen for their Confident Communities Fund allocation. The application is to be completed by the clerk prior to submission to the Community Safety Team at the County Council. The money is to be split between additional hours of patrol in the town by a Police Community Support Officer and a contribution towards a second CCTV camera.

Inspector Whittred of Beds Police is to be asked if she would kindly attend a committee meeting to explain the possible changes to the PCSO system that have been rumoured over recent weeks as well as an explanation as to the PCSO's overtime allocation re the Confident Communities Fund.

9. BUS STOPS

It has been noted that several bus shelters in the town require attention to bring them up to specification. Mr. Mackin said he would take digital photographs of the shelters in question which he would then bring to the next meeting of this committee in order to discuss what remedial work is required. Investigations will then be made as to the costs of repair and/or replacement.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The committee has received a copy of an e:mail to N-power from a local resident regarding the recent power cuts. The resident also maligned the Town Council for giving planning permission for new dwellings in the town thus adding an extra load on the mains and utility services. The resident went on to state that not only was he was paying 'inflation busting council tax rates' but had seen no sign of extra policing to safeguard unprotected properties and unsafe streets with a warning that these matters would be remembered at election time. The resident has received clarification as to the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of local authority, i.e. which authority is responsible for the granting planning permissions etc. as well as the comparatively small content of the Council Tax that the Town Council receives. The resident was further advised that any concerns appertaining to policing should be directed to Beds police.

Concerns have been raised about youths congregating outside the Lloyds Chemist in the early evening. Although the youths are not really causing a problem, several residents have reported that they feel intimidated. The Beat Manager is to be requested to monitor the situation.

The Council's contractor is to be requested to remove litter and prune shrubs at the Kingsmede garden area. Mrs. Harrison said she was prepared to advise the contractor as to the amount of pruning required. The contractor is also to be requested to tidy-up the garden area adjacent to the car park and plant appropriate shrubs accordingly.

A large pothole has appeared in Old Bridge Way adjacent to where the contractors are currently working on the new development. Both the contractor and landowner are to be contacted to fill it in as it has become a hazard to all vehicular traffic.

It is understood that part of the County Council's Highways Department 2008/9 budget will be used to carry out renovation work to the road surface in North Bridge Street.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.