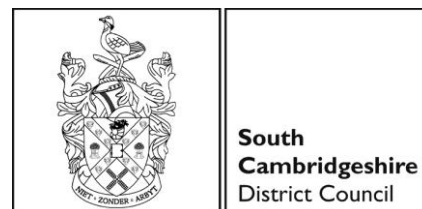


South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

t: 01954 713000

f: 01954 713149

[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)



23 March 2022

To: Chair – Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Peter Fane  
All Members of the Council

Quorum: 12

Dear Councillor

This is a supplement to the previously-published agenda for the meeting of **Council** on **Wednesday, 23 March 2022**, containing a correct version of the previous minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2022.

Yours faithfully

**Liz Watts**

Chief Executive

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## Agenda

### 4. Minutes

To authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 as a correct record.

**Pages**  
**1 - 28**

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# Agenda Item 4

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Tuesday, 22 February 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair  
Councillor Judith Rippeth – Vice-Chair

**Councillors:** Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Dr. Martin Cahn, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Sue Ellington, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Bridget Smith, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams, Dr. Richard Williams and Eileen Wilson

Councillors Cllr Nigel Cathcart, Cllr Peter Fane, Cllr Neil Gough, Cllr Deborah Roberts and Cllr Nick Wright were in attendance remotely.

<b>Officers:</b>	Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
	Peter Campbell	Head of Housing
	Rebecca Dobson	Democratic Services Manager
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
	Jeff Membery	Head of Transformation
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

### 1. **Apologies**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Grenville Chamberlain, Sarah Cheung-Johnson, Clare Delderfield, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Tony Mason, Nick Sample and Ian Sollom.

### 2. **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Heather Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

Councillor Brian Milnes declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

Councillor Eileen Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

Councillor Neil Gough declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board.

Councillor Judith Rippeth declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Henry Batchelor declared a non-pecuniary interest as an unpaid member of the Investment Partnerships Board.

Councillor Peter Fane declared a non-pecuniary interest as an unremunerated Director of Shire Homes and Ermine Street Housing.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart declared an interest in agenda item 8g, as he rented a garage from the Council.

Councillor Mark Howell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the charity Mind.

### **3. Register of Interests**

Members were reminded to inform Democratic Services of any changes in their Register of Members' Financial and Other Interests form.

### **4. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- In the presentation, Circle 33 was corrected to Centre 33.
- In the second paragraph of minute 8d the second sentence was amended to read "She explained that she had examined the original draft Code of Conduct with former Councillor Douglas de Lacey, as Vice Chair and Chair of the Civic Affairs Committee."
- In the second line of the third paragraph of minute 8d the repeated word "that" was removed.
- The last sentence of the fifth paragraph of minute 9 was amended to reflect that some councillors had voted against the Local Plan.
- The final paragraph of minute 13 was amended to reflect that development was not taking place in Fakenham, Norfolk.
- In the eighth paragraph in minute 16a obstruction was amended to abstraction.
- In the fifth paragraph in minute 16b lever was amended to level.

Councillor Gavin Clayton stated that he had mentioned the Cultural Strategy at the last meeting, but he was unsure when in the meeting this had been said. Councillor Heather Williams explained that the estimate of 90% for occupation of commercial properties was inaccurate as it omitted the fact that a current property was vacant.

Councillor Bridget Smith explained that she wished to provide more information with regards to minute 13 Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The developers had contacted her in July 2021 and after receiving officer advice she had declined the offer of a meeting. The Leader had met the developers with the Joint Planning Director on

25 September to explain the proper process and the call for sites. Another meeting had been held with the developers on 7 December to ascertain what their proposals were.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Sue Ellington stated that her question raised in the fifth paragraph of the third minute on the number interim accountants employed had not yet been answered.

## **5. Announcements**

The Chair reminded Councillors that her charity this year was Centre 33 and that they could contact her Executive Assistant, Glenda Hansen, for more details.

## **6. Questions From the Public**

James Littlewood asked the following question on behalf of the organisation Better Ways than Busways:

“In July the GCP Executive Board gave approval for the Cambridge South East Busway Scheme to be submitted to the Department for Transport. Since then, there have been some significant changes in relation to this scheme:

“Firstly. The Preferred Option for the next Local Plan is to include an extension of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus next to the A1307. Therefore, there would be significant economic and transport benefits arising from routing new public transport infrastructure to serve both the existing and the new area of the Biomedical Campus. The new area of the Campus will not be served by the GCPs proposed busway. However, one of the options that was consulted on in 2018 would serve the campus extension. This will have a significant bearing on the Benefit Cost Ratio of the option that was discounted by the GCP in 2018.

“Second. We have reviewed the decision made by the GCP in 2018 to discount a route in the A1307 corridor in favour of a route through open countryside. It is clear that one of the major deciding factors was that the A1307 corridor options could not form part of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM). The CAM has now been dropped and so there is no longer a policy requirement for fully segregated routes. Given that CAM was a major factor in reaching a decision on preferred routes, there is a requirement to review that decision. We also note that the Local Transport Plan is no longer being “refreshed” and will be a more significant review, which won’t be completed until this autumn.

“Thirdly. A Planning Inspector has recently granted permission for a new development on the edge of Stapleford, this includes the creation of a new park. The Busway would run through or adjacent to this park. The impact of the Busway now has to be assessed in terms of impact on that park

rather than the impact on private agricultural land. In other words, the negative impact of the Busway has increased.

“Fourthly. Plans for Cambridge South Station have progressed and the permission will be granted for that scheme well ahead of the busway. This means that Network Rail’s scheme is likely to proceed first and therefore the busway works will have to fit around or be delayed by Network Rail, given that they plan to use some of the same work compounds and will both be working in the same area of the Biomedical Campus. This creates a risk of further delay, compared to alternative options.

“Finally. There is a growing awareness of the carbon emissions created by large infrastructure projects such as the busway. Alternative options require less infrastructure and therefore will have a better carbon budget. As a Council you have pledged to reduce emissions as fast as possible.

“We have carried out some preliminary work to consider an alternative busway within the A1307 corridor. This would involve adding sections of bus lane to the road to avoid localised congestion, as well as creating a new section of busway between the Babraham Road Park & Ride and the Biomedical Campus, which would serve the proposed expansion of the Campus. This route would then join the route currently proposed by the GCP.

“This alternative would provide similar journey times and reliability as the proposed off-road busway but can be delivered at significantly less cost, more quickly and with less damage to the countryside. Due to the expansion plans of the Biomedical Campus it would also deliver higher economic and transport benefits.

“Will the Council use its position on the GCP to ask the GCP at its March meeting to formally revisit the decisions that it made in 2018 and 2021 and also ask for a full assessment of an optimal scheme in the A1307 corridor as a viable alternative?

“I am CEO of Cambridge Past, Present & Future but I am making this request on behalf of Better Ways than Busways which is an umbrella group of parish councils, NGOs and others who believe there is a better viable alternative to the scheme being proposed.”

Councillor Neil Gough explained that major infrastructure projects such as CSET affected a wide geographical area, took time to be implemented and included extensive consultation. This process could not be restarted when inevitable changes took place as this would simply delay improvements in the corridor. The full public enquiry by the independent inspector would hear from the Greater Cambridge Partnership and objectors. All views would be considered as part of the open and transparent decision making process.

James Littlewood asked if the DFT guidance had been followed and whether this could be put in the public domain. Councillor Gough replied that the correct process would be followed and information would be made available on an ongoing basis.

Ben Shelton asked the following question:

“Many residents in Stapleford and Shelford found out through the media that the water supply to households may have been dangerous which naturally caused panic and concern. When did the administration first become aware of this serious issue?”

Councillor Brian Milnes stated that the Council has first come aware of this issue on Wednesday 2 February when it had been contacted by a freelance journalist. The authority had then sought verification from Anglian Water, Health Agencies and the Environment Agency. On Thursday 3 February it was announced that the bore hole had been out of service since June last year and that there was no continuing risk to customers.

Ben Shelton asked if residents had been safe prior to June 2021 and whether any communications with Cambridge Water would be shared with the residents of Shelford and Stapleford. Councillor Brian Milnes replied that there had been extensive communication with Cambridge Water in early February. District Councillors and representatives of Cambridge Water had attended a meeting of Great Shelford Parish Council on 9 February. Multi-agency meetings had been held with representatives from various health organisations. The responses from Cambridge Water had been passed on to residents, assuring them that the water was safe for consumption.

**7. Petitions**

No Petitions were received.

**8. To Consider the Following Recommendations:**

**8 (a) Pay Policy Statement 2022 (Employment and Staffing Committee/14 January 2022)**

Councillor John Williams explained that the Localism Act 2011 required that the Council had a pay policy statement to increase accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting on local pay and overall reward strategy. He stated that the pay gap ratio between the highest and lowest paid remained less than 1:8 and the Council had a minimum wage of £10 for its employees. The gender pay gap continued to favour women, with the mean hourly rate favouring female employees by 9.54%. The Council paid a pension contribution rate of 17%, which when added to the National Insurance increase in April, was a disincentive to employ new staff.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed her support for the recommendation in the report. She suggested that the figures could be analysed by removing the top and bottom pay figures.

In response to a query from Councillor Sue Ellington, the Chief Executive explained that the Returning Officer fee was not paid every year, but only when there was a District Council or General Election. There had been no district council elections held since she had joined the Council and she was unsure how much the rate was but noted that the rates had been agreed by all councils across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Councillor Henry Batchelor stated that as Chair of the Employment and Staffing Committee he invited input from councillors on different ways in which the Committee could examine the Pay Policy Statement in the future.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Henry Batchelor seconded the recommendation in the report. By affirmation, Council

**Agreed** To approve the updated Pay Policy Statement 2022, as required by the Localism Act.

#### **8 (b) Council's Business Plan 2020-2025 (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor Bridget Smith presented this report on the Council's Business Plan which ensured officer and financial resources were allocated appropriately to achieve the actions and objectives detailed within it.

Councillor Neil Gough stated that the five year Business Plan focused on helping businesses to grow, delivering affordable homes, being green to core and prioritising the needs of customers. Due to the impact of Covid-19 considerable practical support had been provided to businesses over the last two years. He thanked officers for their work on this, which had been provided in addition to their usual duties. The next phase would include further support to communities, and renovation work on Council houses, promoting businesses at Northstowe, awarding more zero carbon grants and working to deliver the doubling nature strategy. These measures could not be achieved without a sound financial strategy.

It was noted that on page 57 of the agenda the name of the document was missing in the bullet points at the bottom of the page.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the Council's zero carbon targets and its environment initiatives. However, she expressed concern regarding the financial implications of the Investment Strategy, which the Business Plan was reliant on. She suggested that the Council had residents and not customers or clients, as residents relied on this authority for its services and could not consider an alternative supplier.

Councillor Gavin Clayton welcomed the Encompass training and the training regarding Travellers awareness but expressed concern that this was not included

in the Business Plan. He expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress regarding Cambourne High Street. He supported efforts to ensure that residents claimed the benefits that they were entitled to. He wanted to know whether plastic waste was being recycled in the UK.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed and Councillor Brian Milnes seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (19):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (9):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Gavin Clayton.

Council **Agreed** to

- A)** Approve the 2020-25 Business Plan at Appendix A (with the Action Plan primarily focused on delivery 2022-23); and
- B)** Authorise the Chief Executive to make any minor wording changes required to final drafts, in consultation with the Deputy Leader.

**8 (c) Localised Council Tax Support 2022/2023 (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams presented this report on the proposed Localised Council Tax Support scheme for 2022/23. He explained that the introduction of Universal Credit had changed the way in which the Council applied Localised Council Tax Support by using income bands, as it gave claimants some stability should their circumstances change. It was hoped that further automation of the process would result in further savings. The plan was to review the scheme early in the new financial year to take into account the financial implications of Covid-19.

Councillor John Williams recommended that Council agree the 3.1% increase to ensure that residents of limited means and in receipt of Council Tax support will not be worse off due to inflation.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed her support for this initiative.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor John Batchelor seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation

Council

**Agreed** to approve the adoption of Option 1 set out in the report, comprising the LCTS Income Bands scheme currently in operation, with an uprating of calculation figures in line with the Consumer Price Index.

**8 (d) Capital Programme 2022/2023 to 2026/2027 (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams presented this report on the Council's Capital Programme for the years 2022/23 to 2026/27 following detailed review of the rolling programme by Cabinet at its meeting on 7 February 2022. He explained that the report took into account the changes made to the Public Works Loan Board rule which prevents Councils from investing purely for financial gain. The Council was required to adhere to a number of prudential indicators to ensure that the programme was affordable and Councillor John Williams noted that the total external borrowing required for the five year programme including the Council's current borrowing remained within the limits described in our Capital Strategy.

Councillor John Williams explained that the Council intended to spend nearly £50 million on capital projects, which included over £6 million in total on solar electricity for Waterbeach Depot, electric refuse collection vehicles, LED street lights and additional EV charging points. Over £8m had been allocated to the Civic Hub, Sports Pavilion and Community Centre in Northstowe, with a further £10m planned for 2023/24. Nearly £1m had been allocated for Home Improvement grants every year for the next five years.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that she could not support the recommendation in the report due to the proposed level of borrowing by the Council, which was required to fulfil the investment strategy which she considered to be unsustainable long term and unwise in the current financial climate.

In response to a question from Councillor Ruth Betson, the Chief Executive noted that the Council was proposing to offer laptops to all councillors following the elections in May. The laptops would be purchased this financial year. Current members will be consulted on this matter shortly. Councillor John Williams explained that issuing all councillors with laptops will allow them to participate in Council Anywhere. Councillor Bridget Smith stated that laptops will allow councillors to operate paperless meetings. Councillor Tom Bygott asked what would happen if councillors elected in May refused to use the new laptops. The Chief Executive explained that these laptops could easily be reallocated to officers if necessary.

Councillor Gavin Clayton expressed concern that councillors attending remotely were not able to full participate in meetings by proposing or seconding motions or voting. The Chief Executive explained that this was due to national legislation that the Council had to comply with.

Councillor Bill Handley supported the funding in the budget for Civic Hub, Sports Pavilion and Community Centre in Northstowe.

Councillor Deborah Roberts shared the anxiety of Councillor Heather Williams regarding the Council's levels of borrowing. She suggested that the Council should have consulted with councillors before deciding to pay £50,000 on new laptops, as there were more appropriate initiatives that the Council could spend its money on.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Peter McDonald seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (20):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Councillor Gavin Clayton, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (9):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (0):**

Council

**Agreed** to approve the revised General Fund Capital Programme outlined at Appendix A to the report.

**8 (e) Treasury Management Strategy (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams presented this report on the annual review of the Treasury Management Strategy that complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. He explained that amendments to the Strategy were marked in red in the report. It was noted that the minimum yield expectation remained at 2%, which would be reviewed due to possible increases in inflation.

Councillor Tom Bygott noted that the report expected inflation to peak at 6% in April 2022 and then decline. He asked how quickly the administration were expecting rates to subside and what would be the impact on the Strategy if it did not. Councillor John Williams explained that the Government was responsible for the country's inflation rate. He stated that the yield expectation was currently at 2% but that this would be reviewed daily in light of increases in inflation.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed concern regarding the increase in the rate of borrowing to fund the Strategy which she suggested was unsustainable. Councillor Deborah Roberts shared Councillor Heather Williams concerns and asked if the increase proved to be unsustainable what was the Council's plan B

to resolve this. Councillor John Williams replied that the majority of borrowing was the £205m from public loans board in order to fund Council housing.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Brian Milnes seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (19):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (9):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Gavin Clayton.

Council

**Agreed** to approve the updated Treasury Management Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report which sets out the policy framework for the Council's treasury management activity, including (i) the Treasury Management Policy Statement, (ii) Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and (iii) Treasury Indicators.

**8 (f) Capital Strategy (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams presented this report to establish and approve an updated Capital Strategy that complied with CIPFA's guidance. He explained that the Strategy was reviewed annually and had been amended to reflect the changes to the Public Works Loan Board rules and the introduction of an Infrastructure Funding Statement which local authorities must now produce in respect of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the changes made by the Public Works Loan Board as stricter controls on local council borrowing had been required. She declared that she could not support the recommendation in the report due to her concerns regarding the Council's level of borrowing.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Bill Handley seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (19):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (9):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Gavin Clayton.

Council

**Agreed**

to approve the updated Capital Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report which sets the policy framework for the development, management and monitoring of capital investment, including Prudential Indicators.

**8 (g) Housing Revenue Account: Revenue & Capital Budget 2022/2023 (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams introduced this report, which considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2022/23. He explained that the HRA was a ring-fenced account and by law could not be subsidised by the General Fund. Following a four year 1% cut in social rents by the Government to 2020, rents had been permitted to rise by the Consumer Prices Index plus one percent. The decision to increase rent by 4.1% would generate over £31.5m out of a total income for the HRA of over £34.5m, which indicated the importance of council house rent. With regards to the Capital Budget, £17m would be invested in building new Council homes and over £7m in improving existing stock, as part of the Council's Business Plan.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart understood the reason for the increase but expressed concern that rent could increase to 80% of market rent in the future, which those on lower income would struggle to afford. This increase would represent an increase of approximately a third of current rates and he asked for assurance that rent would not be increased to this amount in the future.

Councillor Deborah Roberts expressed concern at the proposed 4.1% increase at time when those on a low income were suffering from other inflationary pressures including the cost of fuel. Councillor Tom Bygott stated that increases in oil and gas prices were likely to result in a steep rise in inflation and this made the additional burden of a rent increase hard to justify. Councillor John Williams explained that the tenants on low incomes could access housing benefits and housing advice from officers. He stated that freezing rents would only benefit those who could afford to pay it and so made little sense.

Councillor Mark Howell explained that he had been responsible for recommending rent rises as Housing Portfolio Holder and he appreciated how difficult the decision was. He concluded that in the current circumstances, including the increase in the price of fuel, he could not support the proposed rent increase.

Councillor John Batchelor explained that 90 new Council homes had been bought this year and 120 more were in the pipeline but funds were needed to invest in new houses. He congratulated the New Build Team on these figures.

Councillor Heather Williams raised concerns regarding fuel poverty facing our residents, including those who used oil to heat their homes. She suggested that some of the surplus for the year of 2021/22 could be used instead of increasing rents by the amount recommended. The Head of Housing confirmed that the Council was able to set the level of rent increase. Councillor Heather Williams explained that she supported the capital recommendations in the report and asked if two votes could be taken, one for recommendations in paragraphs A to F and one for the recommendations in paragraphs G-I. The Chair agreed to this request. Councillor John Williams suggested that the rent increase allowed the capital recommendations to be increased so it was not practical to agree one without the other.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor John Batchelor seconded the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken on paragraphs A-F and were cast as follows:

**In favour (19):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (9):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Gavin Clayton.

A further vote was taken on paragraphs G-I and were cast as follows:

**In favour (27):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Dr Martin Cahn, Graham Cone, Dr Claire Daunton, Sue Ellington, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (0):**

**Abstain (2):**

Councillor Gavin Clayton and Dr Richard Williams.

Council **Agreed** to

Housing Revenue Account (HRA): Revenue

- A) approve the HRA revenue budget for 2022/2023 as shown in the HRA detailed budgets as presented at Appendix A.

HRA: Review of Rents and Charges

- B) Approve that council dwellings rents for all social rented properties be increased by inflation of 3.1%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of 4.1%, with effect from 4 April 2022.
- C) Approve that affordable rents (inclusive of service charge) are reviewed in line with rent legislation, to ensure that the rents charged are no more than 80% of market rent, with rents for existing tenants increased by no more than inflation of 3.1%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of up to 4.1%.

Local policy is to cap affordable rents (inclusive of all service charges) at the Local Housing Allowance level. As the Local Housing Allowance was increased significantly in late March 2020, affordable rent increases will be capped at 4.1% from April 2022, which is still well below the 2022/23 Local Housing Allowances levels.

- D) Approve that garage rents be increased by inflation of 3.1% measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in increase of 4.1%, with effect from 4 April 2022.
- E) Approve that council dwelling rents for properties with an EPC rating of A or B are increased to 105% of target rent on re-let.
- F) Approve the proposed service charges for HRA services and facilities provided to both tenants and leaseholders, as shown in Appendix D.

HRA: Capital

- G) Approve the required level of funding for new build investment between 2022/2023 and 2026/2027 to ensure that commitments can be met in respect of the investment of all right to buy receipts currently retained or anticipated to be received by the authority for this period. This expenditure will take the form of HRA new build, with the 60% top up met by other HRA resources.
- H) Approve the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts as shown in Appendix B.
- I) Approve the Housing Capital Programme as shown in Appendix C.

## **8 (h) General Fund Budget 2022/2023 (Cabinet/7 February 2022)**

Councillor John Williams presented this report which invited Council to consider and approve the summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2022/23. He thanked the finance team for their work in compiling the report. He explained that the aim of the budget was to tackle climate change at a local level in South Cambridgeshire. Promoting affordable housing and local businesses were also priorities. He explained that the Government's financial settlement continued to be for a year instead of three years, as originally promised, and this made financial planning more difficult.

Councillor John Williams explained that Council Tax only raised enough to cover about a third of the Council's expenditure, with the rest from sources outside the authority's control, including Business Rates and grants such as the New Homes Bonus. The proposed Council Tax increase equated to an extra £5 a year for a Band D property or an extra 10 pence a week. This authority's Council Tax remained in the lowest 25% in the country.

Councillor John Williams estimated that the Council would deliver a balanced budget with £2.1m going into General Fund reserves, including £1.1m from the Business Rates Pool to the Renewables Reserve, bringing the total of that reserve to £4m.

Councillor John Williams explained that a total of £6 million would tackle climate change on a local level in South Cambridgeshire and halve emissions by 2030 and reduce them to zero by 2050. Relevant projects included installing a solar farm at the Waterbeach Depot, initiatives to improve and adapt waste services to encourage recycling and minimise waste, and the maintenance of the 275 kilometres of awarded watercourses that the Council was responsible for. The Council's retrofit of its offices at Cambourne were nearing completion, reducing the carbon footprint of the building to 25% of current levels by 2030 and to 10% of current levels by 2050.

Councillor Heather Williams proposed an alternative budget. Due to cost of living increases it was appropriate to freeze an increase in Council Tax. She recommended that more should be done to prevent fraud, fly-tipping and that an extra planning enforcement officer should be appointed. She stated that money could be saved by reducing the number of Special Responsibility Allowances that could be claimed by a councillor from two to one. She concluded that money could be taken from the Transformation Budget to reduce the need for a Council Tax increase.

Councillor Deborah Roberts explained that many of the District's residents who lived in large homes were now on medium or low incomes but were on a high Council Tax band due to the size of their property. Oil, gas and food prices were all increasing and so the Council had a moral duty to keep Council Tax low.

Councillor Sue Ellington supported the proposal to appoint an extra planning enforcement officer, as this would help the Council to enforce its planning decisions as the authority was in danger of having a reputation for not carrying

out enforcement. Councillor Tumi Hawkins explained that there was currently a vacancy in the enforcement team and a review was taking place to see how the current resources could be best deployed. It was noted that the number of enforcement cases had reduced this year, partly due to Covid-19. Councillor Sue Ellington explained that she was not inferring any criticism of the Council's planning officers.

Councillor Graham Cone supported the Council Tax freeze, due to the hardship that our residents were facing. He stated that all councillors were aware of enforcement areas in their wards and so an extra planning enforcement officer made sense.

Councillor John Williams explained that Council Tax bands were set according to 1991 property prices. He suggested that response to fly-tipping had improved in the four years since the current administration took office. The current administration had increased the anti-fraud budget by £15,000 also set up an anti-fraud team. He explained that a Council Tax freeze would have an ongoing detrimental effect on the authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy and create a £1.5m hole in the Council's budget in five years time.

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the Conservative alternative budget. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (10):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

It was noted that Councillor Anna Bradnam meant to vote against the proposal.

**Against (16):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Dr Martin Cahn, Gavin Clayton, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor John Batchelor.

Council **Rejected** the Conservative alternative budget.

Councillor Gavin Clayton proposed Labour's alternative budget. He suggested that instead of paying £2.1m into reserves, this money could be used to develop a Cultural Strategy to develop arts projects and working with the charity Mind to improve the mental health of young people.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart supported this alternative budget which would improve the lives of residents by providing some form of nursing home provision, introducing a pilot scheme for green infrastructure and protecting Conservation areas.

Councillor Dr Martin Cahn explained that he was a member of the Group that was looking at developing a Cultural Strategy and it was premature to commit the Council to a partner at this stage of the Strategy's development. Councillor Bill Handley agreed with Councillor Cahn. He supported the development of a Cultural Strategy and the Council would work with its partners during its development. Councillor Graham Cone stated that £40,000 was a relatively small amount for the production of a Cultural Strategy and to support art development.

Councillor John Williams explained that the Council had three housing advice officers to support its tenants. The Cultural Strategy was in an embryonic stage and it was expected that it would be delivered next year. He understood that concerns regarding nursing home provision but he considered this to be a County Council function. Improving green infrastructure was already being considered and a £10,000 budget was not necessary.

Councillor Gavin Clayton proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the Labour alternative budget. A vote was taken and was cast as follows:

**In favour (6):**

Councillors Tom Bygott, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell and Heather Williams.

**Against (21):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, John Williams, Dr Richard Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya.

Councillor Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya questioned whether the savings depicted on pages 275-6 on the agenda were realistic. Councillor John Williams stated that the budget figures were based on a worst case scenario and so he was confident that it would be delivered.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams welcomed the extra £2.2m for the planning services and asked what it would fund. Councillor John Williams explained that the Joint Planning service was being reviewed as part of the transformation project.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that she supported the green initiatives in the budget and the establishment of a joint enforcement group. However, she opposed the £200,000 on replacing carpets and £70,000 on redecorating. She stated that there was an error on paragraph 28 on page 189 of the agenda where the bottom right SFA should be in the total at the bottom. The table indicated more funds from the Government and so the increase in Council Tax could not be justified. Councillor John Williams explained that the extra funds from the

Government were a one off payment and so the increase in Council Tax was necessary to avoid a funding gap in the longer term.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Peter McDonald seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (18):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (10):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (0)**

Council **Agreed** to

- A)** Take into account the detailed budgets presented at Appendix B, and summarised at Appendix A, with an estimated General Fund Gross Operating Expenditure for 2022/2023 of £78.807 million, estimated Gross Operating Income of £52.728 million and estimated General Fund Net Operating Expenditure of £26.079 million.
- B)** Acknowledge the key factors which have led to the proposed 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget, with service pressures summarised at Appendix C and offsetting efficiency savings/policy options summarised at Appendix D.
- C)** Acknowledge that the 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget gross expenditure is covered by forecast income sources (assuming no change in Government grant) and, therefore, any addition(s) to expenditure that are made by the Cabinet or Council will need to be met from the General Fund Balance.
- D)** Approve the 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget taking into account the statement by the Chief Finance Officer on the risks and robustness of the estimates as required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (reproduced at Appendix F).
- E)** Set the Council Tax Requirement for 2022/2023 at £10,489,403.
- F)** Approve an increase in the District element of the Council Tax of £5 per annum, giving an average Band D Council Tax of £160.31, plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority.

- G)** Authorise the Head of Finance, on the basis of the proposals set out in the report, to prepare the formal Council Tax Resolution for presentation to Council at its scheduled meeting on 22 February 2022.
- H)** Approve the estimates of the amounts required to be made under the Non-domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 as set out in paragraphs 44 and 45.
- I)** Approve the acceptance of any grants made during 2022/2023 by the Government under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 in respect of Business Rates.
- J)** Approve the use of the additional income from the Business Rate Pool, estimated at £1,100,000 in 2022/2023, for transfer to the established Renewables Reserve for priority projects.
- K)** Subject to any changes to the recommendations above, Full Council approves:
  - (i)** The 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget based on known commitments at this time and planned levels of Service/functions resulting in a Budget Requirement of £22.668 million.
  - (ii)** The District Council Precept on the Collection Fund (Council Tax Requirement) of £10.489 million in 2022/2023 (based on the Local Government Settlement) and a Band D Council Tax of £160.31.
- L)** The Council agrees that when appointing the auditor for the next appointment period starting in 2023/24, it accepts the invitation to take part in public sector audit appointments (PSAA) process.

## **9. Council Tax Resolution**

Councillor John Williams presented this report which recommended that Council formally approve the total Council Tax for 2022/23 for the residents of South Cambridgeshire, including the Council Tax requirements of precepting organisations.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Bill Handley seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and votes were cast as follows:

### **favour (18):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

### **Against (10):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Abstain (0)**

Council

**Agreed**      The Council Tax Resolution, detailed at Appendix A.

**10. Swavesey Byeways Rate 2022-23**

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins introduced this report on the annual meeting of the Swavesey Byeways Advisory Committee held on 20 January 2022 which had proposed that the current rate should remain at £1.20 per hectare within the charge paying area.

Councillor Sue Ellington, local member for Swavesey, reported that work on the Byeways had been success story involving the purchase of a vital piece of machinery and the co-operation of local landowners with the Council and the parish council.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins proposed and Councillor Brian Milnes seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation:

Council

**Agreed**      to retain the level of the Swavesey Byeways rate at £1.20 per hectare for land within the charge paying area for the period 2022/23 in order to fund the required level of maintenance.

**11. Calendar of Meetings 2022/23**

Councillor Anna Bradnam proposed and Councillor Judith Rippeth seconded the recommendation in the report to approve the Calendar of meetings for the next municipal year. A vote was taken and by affirmation the

Council

**Agreed**      to approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23.

**12. Update on the OxCam Arc**

In response to questioning Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the Council were still waiting to hear official notification from the Government on the status of the OxCam Arc. She further explained that funding had been provided for OxCam Arc staff for a transition period of six months by the members of the Arc.

**13. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority**

Council **Noted** the report.

**14. Greater Cambridge Partnership**

Council **Noted** the report.

**15. Membership of Committees and other bodies**

By affirmation, Council

**Agreed** to endorse the appointment of Councillor Peter Fane as Chair of the Planning Committee.

**16. Urgent Executive Decision**

Council **Noted** the report.

**17. Questions From Councillors**

**17 (a) From Councillor Judith Rippeth**

How have we as a council been able to provide Covid relief to businesses through the allocation of the discretionary grant funding?

Councillor Bridget Smith replied that the Council had provided significant discretionary funding to local businesses with £4.6m being awarded from April 2020 to June 2021 and an additional £1.8m awarded since June 2021.

Councillor Judith Rippeth asked if there had been any feedback from local businesses. Councillor Bridget Smith replied that many businesses had replied to the Council stating how thankful they were for the grants which had been delivered speedily and efficiently.

**17 (b) From Councillor Sue Ellington**

How much extra does it cost the council in officer and committee time for a planning application to come to committee?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins replied that it was unclear what Councillor Sue Ellington meant by "extra". Obviously many of the costs involved, such as officer time, were fixed costs, which would be paid regardless of whether there was a meeting. Nevertheless the estimated cost of a recent 5 hour meeting was £7,892 or £1,578 per hour.

Councillor Sue Ellington explained that at the Council meeting in November she had been informed that enforcement action had not been taken due to the cost. She wanted to know what the cost of enforcement action was compared to the cost of taking a planning application to Committee. Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that she did have the figures for the cost of enforcement action but it

was expected that the Transformation Project would make enforcement action more efficient.

**17 (c) From Councillor Heather Williams**

How much has been spent since May 2018 on early retirements, gardening leaves and any other way to pay employees to leave?

Councillor John Williams explained that the Council was a well run professional organisation with an ambitious business plan and not all the figures existed to answer the question.

Councillor Heather Williams asked how much money was being used to get rid off staff. Councillor John Williams explained that the Council treated officers with respect and fairness. If necessary a fair severance payment would be agreed to award former colleagues what they were entitled to.

**17 (d) From Councillor Graham Cone**

How much has been spent on new furniture – tables chairs and sofas, for the council over the last 18 months?

Councillor Neil Gough explained that the Council was adapting to a hybrid way of working with staff working in the office and at home. This had necessitated some purchasing of newer technologically advanced furniture as well as some furniture for disabled workers as part of the access to work scheme. This cost of this was £46,000.

Councillor Graham Cone asked if the total could be divided into the furniture for disabled officers and new furniture. Councillor Neil Gough replied that if this figure could be provided it would form part of a written answer.

**17 (e) From Councillor Bunty Waters**

How much has been spent on the recent refurbishment of the councillors' lounge?

Councillor Neil Gough replied that the original lounge was built 18 years ago and it was in need of refurbishment. Former Chair Douglas de Lacey had asked for improvements to the room to be made. The new room could be used for meetings and for work by councillors and officers. In response to Councillor Bunty Waters' supplementary question the Head of Finance explained that the refurbishment had been funded from the office accommodation budget and no special budget had been used.

**17 (f) From Councillor Ruth Betson**

How much has been spent on agency staff and management consultants since May 2018?

Councillor John Williams explained that at times the Council needed to use temporary staff as it was not possible to have all the skills necessary to carry out the work in-house and it would be uneconomic to recruit permanent officers for short-term positions. The two main services that used temporary staff were the Waste Service and the Planning Service. For the Waste Service £23,872 was spent in 2018/19 on temporary staff, £62,009 in 2019/20, £29,031 in 2020/21 and £10,684 in 2021/22. For the Planning Service £620,700 was spent in 2018/19, £899,971 in 2019/20, £566,396 in 2020/21 and £318,724 in 2021/22. A significant number of temporary staff had been required to work on the Local Plan, Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans. In other areas of the Council £202,569 had been spend in 2018/19, £505,779 in 2019/2020, £366,111 in 2020/21 and £239,647 in 2020/21. Approximately £231,000 had been spent on the Transformation Project that had delivered savings and would continue to do so. Overall the expenditure on temporary staff was comparable to the amount spent in 2017/18 when the Council was under the previous administration.

On occasion, agency staff had to be employed when it had been impossible to recruit to a permanent position. For the Waste Service £303,084 was spent in 2018/19 on agency staff, £360,787 in 2019/20, £344,250 in 2020/21 and £284,876 in 2021/22. For the Planning Service £431,346 was spent in 2018/19, £1,422,255 in 2019/20, £1,002,274 in 2020/21 and £503,819 in 2021/22. This expenditure had been necessary to maintain services. The figure for 2021/22 was also comparable to that spent in 2017/18, but when adjusted for Covid-19 related agency costs, the figure for 2021/22 was £100,000 lower than the previous administration.

Councillor Ruth Betson asked if the money spent on agency and temporary staff could have been better allocated to other projects such as developing Cambourne High Street. Councillor John Williams replied that temporary and agency staff were only employed when necessary and the Council had found it difficult to recruit to all permanent vacancies.

**17 (g) From Councillor Dr. Richard Williams**

How many dedicated trees officers does the Greater Cambridge Planning Service currently employ?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that the Council employed two trees officers, one post had become vacant and was currently being filled by an agency worker. Efforts to recruit to the vacant position had not been successful and so a supplement was being considered to make the post more attractive during a national shortage.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams asked if extra resources could be allocated to ensure that parish councils could receive timely responses to their queries. Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins replied that the work was being covered and requested that parishioners contact her if they had any concerns about the level of service being received.

**17 (h) From Councillor Nick Wright**

How much money is at risk of repayment from applications within the planning service that haven't been determined within 26 weeks and how much in terms of discharge of condition applications is at risk of being returned?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins replied that the total value that the legislation allowed to refund was £300,493. The majority of this was for major applications, which accounted for approximately £260,000. There were 24 of these applications and 15 of them 6-12 months old. Only £10,000 worth of applications related to discharge of condition applications. Only £9,492 had been returned and this related to 17 applications.

There was insufficient time for Councillor Nick Wright to ask a supplementary question.

Council **Agreed** by affirmation to continue its meeting past the four hour period.

**18. Notices of Motion**

**18 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor Richard Williams**

Councillor Dr Richard Williams proposed and Councillor Dr Martin Cahn seconded the following motion:

"The UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee states that "Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth: genes, species and ecosystems. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits humans get from the natural environment. It contributes to the economy, health and well-being, and it enriches our lives.

"Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is a matter of great importance to the parishes and communities of South Cambridgeshire and is a key objective of national and local policy, as recognised in the emerging Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document and the new Environment Act 2021.

"Parish and Town Councils have an important role to play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and have a statutory responsibility to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in the exercise their functions.

"To help Parish Councils meet their statutory commitments and to help meet the aspirations of the communities of South Cambridgeshire this Council commits, as some other councils have done, to producing guidance for Parish and Town Councils as how they can most effectively conserve and enhance biodiversity in their areas, including a toolkit for drafting a Parish or Town biodiversity policy and carrying out a biodiversity audit."

Councillor Dr Richard Williams explained that parish councils were under a legal obligation to comply with this policy but were receiving no specific guidance from the Council. He suggested that the Council could liaise with Natural Cambridgeshire in providing a toolkit for parish councils, as they had guided other local authorities.

Councillor Bridget Smith stated that the Council was already liaising with parish councils and other community groups and a climate fortnight event had been held the previous evening, which included details of a 16 hour training course that gave details on how to recruit volunteers and keep people motivated. She was happy to support the motion but wanted to ensure that the Council worked with Natural Cambridgeshire without duplicating its work.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that biodiversity was a key part in the emerging Local Plan and the doubling nature strategy included guidance to both parish and town councils. Free trees had been offered to all parishes and parish councils were encouraged to attend area team meetings.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the motion as sensible, pragmatic and identifying a gap in the support provided to parish councils by this authority. She added that some of the smaller parish councils found it harder to attend group meetings, which tended to be dominated by the larger parish councils.

Councillor Dr Martin Cahn explained that he supported bio-diversity and recognised that town and parish councils could help to deliver the Council's doubling nature target by 2050. The purpose of the motion was to provide information and support for local people who wanted to use their local knowledge to promote bio-diversity in their parish.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams welcomed the responses from Councillor Bridget Smith and Councillor Tumi Hawkins as it demonstrated the need to ensure that knowledge was shared and parish councils were directed to the support required to promote biodiversity.

Councillor Bridget Smith expressed concern that the motion could be committing the Council to further expenditure. On the advice of the Deputy Head of Legal the Chair proposed and Councillor Heather Williams seconded that amendment of the phrase "producing guidance" to "providing guidance". Councillor Dr Richard Williams and Councillor Dr Martin Cahn both agreed to this amendment, which was accepted without debate.

A vote was taken and by affirmation Council **Agreed** the following motion:

The UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee states that "Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth: genes, species and ecosystems. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits humans get from the natural environment. It contributes to the economy, health and well-being, and it enriches our lives."

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is a matter of great importance to the parishes and communities of South Cambridgeshire and is a key objective of national and local policy, as recognised in the emerging Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document and the new Environment Act 2021.

Parish and Town Councils have an important role to play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and have a statutory responsibility to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in the exercise their functions.

To help Parish Councils meet their statutory commitments and to help meet the aspirations of the communities of South Cambridgeshire this Council commits, as some other councils have done, to providing guidance for Parish and Town Councils as how they can most effectively conserve and enhance biodiversity in their areas, including a toolkit for drafting a Parish or Town biodiversity policy and carrying out a biodiversity audit.

**18 (b) Standing in the name of Councillor Heather Williams**

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Tom Bygott seconded the following motion:

“That this Council opposes congestion charging in Greater Cambridge.”

Councillor Heather Williams stated that a congestion charge was wrong for the people of South Cambridgeshire, as it would add to the already rising cost of living as for many people there was no viable alternative to driving into Cambridge.

Councillor Tom Bygott explained that South Cambridgeshire was a rural area and that all the proposals being consulted on expected that our residents would pay the full congestion charge fee, whilst others would receive discounts. Other cities that had introduced a congestion charge also had a viable system of public transport, such as a metro system, but many villages only had two buses a day.

Councillor Neil Gough explained that there were a number of options being considered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership to free up road space and there was unanimous support on the Board for improving public transport, but funding was required for this. He recommended that the Council wait for the results of the public consultation exercise before it takes a formal view. He therefore urged councillors to reject the motion.

Councillor Graham Cone expressed his support for the motion, as a congestion charge would have a negative impact on the poorest in his ward who were already having to cope with rises prices and rising rents.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that many parish councils had not responded to the consultation due to its format. It was clear that the District's communities were opposed to the congestion charge, which would have a detrimental effect on the poorest in society.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (6):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Mark Howell, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Against (17):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Abstain (0)**

Council **Rejected** this Motion.

**18 (c) Standing in the name of Councillor Mark Howell**

Councillor Mark Howell proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the following motion:

“This council does not support the current CSET proposals. The Greater Cambridge Partnership Board member for South Cambridgeshire District Council will reflect the views of this council at future board meetings.”

Councillor Mark Howell explained that he supported the concerns of Mr Littlewood who had asked a public question earlier in the meeting regarding CSET. He explained that the situation had changed and so the Greater Cambridge Partnership should reconsider its current proposal which would give up good agricultural land.

Councillor Peter Fane stated that CSET was more than just a busway, which was in phase 2 of the plan. Phase 1 included safety work on the A1307. He explained that the exact route of the busway would have to consider new factors such as the location of a retirement facility in Stapleford and the Mayor's Local Transport and Community Plan. The Council should not seek to give an official instruction to the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Councillor Neil Gough explained that he was the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Board, which had to consider all the competing factors to deliver its objectives and minimise the environmental impact. No transportation scheme was ever universally welcomed but the evidence indicated that CSET was essential.

Councillor Brian Milnes expressed his disappointment that a project that had enjoyed support from Conservative County Councillors and the Conservative former Mayor was now being objected to.

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that a proper co-ordinated transport system needed to be built that took into account a new block flats in Great Shelford, which prevented the widening of the railway line. He opposed CSET which would prevent the long term rebuilding of the railway network.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams stated that the Greater Cambridge Partnership needed to take into account the impact of Covid-19 on travel patterns and reconsider its plans and consider an alternative which was less environmentally damaging.

Councillor John Batchelor, as local member for the Linton ward, stated that there were major concerns regarding congestion, pollution and safety issues with the A1307. He concluded that CSET could provide a quick, reliable alternative to using the car and he urged Council not to dismiss it.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that decision makers needed to respond to changes in circumstances and be pragmatic. The Greater Cambridge Partnership needed to consider an alternative to CSET.

Councillor Dr Martin Cahn recognised the challenges involved and suggested that there was a need for a compromise. He could not support a motion which rejected what appeared to be the best available solution without suggesting a viable alternative.

Councillor Graham Cone expressed his support for the motion, as it would avoid destroying any green belt land and would allow alternatives to be considered.

Councillor Mark Howell stated that he wanted the Greater Cambridge Partnership to consider an alternative to CSET, respond to changing circumstances and avoid building on some of the best green belt land in Cambridgeshire.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In favour (6):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Mark Howell, Heather Williams and Dr Richard Williams.

**Against (17):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Dr Claire Daunton, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sally Ann Hart, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Abstain (0)**

Council **Rejected** this Motion.

**19. Chair's Engagements**

Council **Noted** the Chair's engagements since the last Council meeting, including the attendance at a service at Ely Cathedral for the Justice service for Cambridgeshire on 3 October 2021, which was not listed in the agenda.

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**The Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.**

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