

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 25 May 2017 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor David McCraith – Chairman
Councillor Brian Burling – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Alex Colyer	Executive Director (Corporate Services)
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Monitoring Officer
	Wilma Wilkie	Democratic Services

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2017/18

The outgoing Chairman, Councillor Sue Ellington, informed the Council that she had raised £5,000 for Dogs for Good, her chosen charity during her term of office.

Councillor Ellington invited nominations for the office of Chairman of the Council for the 2017/18 civic year.

On the nomination of Councillor Peter Topping, seconded by Councillor Nick Wright and there being no further nominations, Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor David McCraith be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2017/18 civic year.

Councillor McCraith signed the acceptance of office. He reported that his chosen charities were Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau, Macmillan Cancer Support, Air Training Corps 2484 (Bassingbourn) Squadron and (Cambourne) Detached Flight.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2017/18

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2017/18 civic year.

Councillor Brian Burling was nominated by Councillor Peter Topping, which was duly seconded by Councillor Ray Manning.

Councillor John Batchelor was nominated by Councillor Bridget Smith, which was duly seconded by Councillor Tumi Hawkins.

Both nominees left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 28 votes compared to 17, Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor Brian Burling be appointed

Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2017/18 civic year.

Councillor Burling signed the acceptance of office.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Henry Batchelor, Grenville Chamberlain, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, Alex Riley, Edd Stonham, Ingrid Tregoeing, Bunt Waters, and David Whiteman-Downes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Members' interests were made.

5. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Members that they needed to update their register of interests whenever their circumstances changed.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to:

- a) The amendment of the last two sentences of the second paragraph of minute 9(c) to read as follows:

‘Councillor Lynda Harford explained that progress of the Inspection of the Council’s Local Plan, which was being carried out at the same time as that of Cambridge City, was painfully slow. She also expressed the hope that the Government’s Housing White Paper would include provision for encouraging developers to build homes once planning permission had been granted.’

- b) The amendment of the text in resolution (c) of minute 9(d) at the top of page 7 to read as follows:

‘...from the sale of self-build plots or could alternatively be used by way of a grant to a registered provider, where the registered provider would then provide the 70% top up to build new homes.’

- c) Adding the words ‘per year’ after ‘£600,000’ in the last line of the second paragraph on page 5.

The minutes of the extraordinary meetings held on 13th April 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment of a number of typographical errors and additions to the list of Members present.

7. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

The report of the Returning Officer on the result of the by election for the Bourn Ward held on 4th May 2017 was **NOTED** and the Chairman welcomed Councillor Ruth Betson to the first meeting of Council since her election.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER**

On the nomination of Councillor Peter Topping, seconded by Councillor Bridget Smith, Council **AGREED** unanimously that Mr Alex Colyer, in his role as Interim Chief Executive Officer, continue as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer, until such time as Mrs Beverly Agass commenced her employment as Chief Executive Officer.

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman drew Members' attention to arrangements for the Parklife family fun day which would take place at Milton Country Park on Sunday 25th June 2017. He encouraged Members to volunteer to help out on the day.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, made a number of announcements which are summarised below:

- Councillor Topping drew attention to the 100 Day Plan announced by the newly elected Mayor for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This included commissioning business cases for the first round of major transport schemes; providing the first tranche of funding for priority transport and infrastructure schemes; announcing the first wave of new affordable housing schemes; and launching the development of a strategy to deliver 100,000 new homes across the area. Councillor Topping had been appointed New Homes and Communities Portfolio Holder and South Cambridgeshire District Council would lead on housing work. There would be 5-10 schemes in the initial phase; at least one in each district.
- The Combined Authority had agreed to produce regular reports on its work. These would be reported to future Council meetings.
- Councillor Topping reported that Rob Mungovan Senior Ecology Officer had recently left the Council to take up a post with the Wild Trout Trust. He would be replaced by Daniel Weaver. On behalf of the Council, Councillor Topping thanked Mr Mungovan for his service to the Council and his work to protect the environment of South Cambridgeshire. Councillors Bard, Cathcart, de Lacey and Kindersley echoed comments made by Councillor Topping and paid their own personal tribute to Mr Mungovan.
- Councillor Topping advised that he had appointed Councillor Tim Scott as the Council's Environment Champion. He thanked Councillor Scott for agreeing to take on this role.
- Councillor Topping informed Council that he had invited Councillor Sue Ellington to join Cabinet to take on a new Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. He thanked Councillor Ellington for taking on this role. He confirmed that other Cabinet roles would remain unchanged.
- Councillor Topping informed Members that it was planned to consult with residents and villages over the summer. The aim was to provide communities with an opportunity to influence future thinking about what the district should look like in 5-10 years' time. The outcome would inform development of the Council's Corporate Plan.

10. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

It was noted that Mr John Dove had submitted a question to Councillor Lynda Harford. As Mr Dove was no longer able to attend the meeting, he would receive a written response.

11. PETITIONS

It was noted that no petitions for consideration by Council had been received since the last meeting.

12. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES 2017/18

Council considered a report seeking approval of the allocation of seats on committees; the appointment of committee chairmen, vice-chairmen, members and substitutes; and the reappointment of the Lead Independent Person and Deputy Independent Person.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, proposed the allocation of committee seats, as set out in Appendix A to the report and the nominations of the Political Group Leaders/Convenor to seats on committees which were tabled at the meeting, the reappointment of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons and the following nominations for committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen:

Committee	Chairman	Vice-Chairman
Audit and Corporate Governance	Andrew Fraser	Grenville Chamberlain
Civic Affairs	David McCraith	Charles Nightingale
Employment	Ray Manning	Val Barrett
Licensing	Alex Riley	Raymond Matthews
Partnerships Review	Ben Shelton	Bunty Waters
Planning	Pippa Corney	David Bard
Scrutiny and Overview	Tony Orgee	Kevin Cuffley

Councillor Nick Wright seconded the proposal.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Tony Orgee as Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Councillor John Williams proposed the appointment of Councillor Philippa Hart as Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Tumi Hawkins.

Councillors Orgee and Hart left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 26 votes compared to 18, Councillor William's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Kevin Cuffley as Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Councillor John Williams proposed the appointment of Councillor Philippa Hart as Vice Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Tumi Hawkins.

Councillors Cuffley and Hart left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 27 votes compared to 18, Councillor William's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Kevin Cuffley as Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Councillor Douglas de Lacey proposed the appointment of Councillor Cicely Murfitt as Vice Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Deborah Roberts.

Councillors Cuffley and Murfitt left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 23 votes compared to 19 and 3 abstentions, Councillor de Lacey's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Ben Shelton as Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee, Councillor John Batchelor proposed the appointment of Councillor Henry Batchelor as Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Janet Lockwood.

Councillor Shelton left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 27 votes compared to 17, Councillor Batchelor's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Bunty Waters as Vice Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee, Councillor John Batchelor proposed the appointment of Councillor Henry Batchelor as Vice Chairman of the Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Janet Lockwood.

Following the undertaking of a ballot and, with 28 votes compared to 17, Councillor Batchelor's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor Pippa Corney as Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor Sebastian Kindersley as Chairman of the Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Philippa Hart.

Councillors Corney and Kindersley left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 25 votes compared to 17 and 1 abstention, Councillor Smith's proposal was declared lost.

With reference to the appointment of Councillor David Bard as Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor Sebastian Kindersley as Vice Chairman of the Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Deborah Roberts.

Councillors Bard and Kindersley left the Council Chamber during the undertaking of a ballot and, with 26 votes compared to 16, Councillor Smith's proposal was declared lost.

Council **APPROVED:**

(a) The allocation of seats on committees and joint committees, as follows:

Committee	No. of seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Audit and Corporate Governance	9	6	2	1
Civic Affairs	12	8	3	1
Employment	9	5	3	1
Licensing	15	9	4	2
Planning	12	8	3	1
Partnerships Review	9	6	2	1
Scrutiny and Overview	9	6	2	1
Total	75	48	19	8

Committee	No. of seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Joint Development Control – Cambridge Fringes	6	4	1	1

- (b) The nominations of the Political Group Leaders/Convenor to seats on committees and joint bodies, as set out below:

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
Grenville Chamberlain Simon Crocker Christopher Cross Andrew Fraser Roger Hall Tony Orgee	John Batchelor John Williams	Douglas de Lacey	

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
1. Graham Cone 2. Ray Manning 3. Charles Nightingale 4. Richard Turner 5. Bunty Waters	1. Anna Bradnam 2. Philippa Hart	1. <i>See Non-Group</i> 2. Neil Davies 3. Peter Johnson 4. Cicely Murfitt 5. Edd Stonham	Nigel Cathcart (<i>substitute seat accepted from Independent Group</i>)

Civic Affairs Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
Brian Burling Ray Manning David McCraith Charles Nightingale Peter Topping Bunty Waters Nick Wright	Jose Hales Janet Lockwood Bridget Smith	Deborah Roberts	Nigel Cathcart (<i>seat accepted from Conservative Group</i>)

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
1. David Bard 2. Grenville Chamberlain 3. Simon Crocker 4. Raymond Matthews 5. Alex Riley	1. Sebastian Kindersley 2. Aidan Van de Weyer	1. Douglas de Lacey 2. Neil Davies 3. Edd Stonham 4. Peter Johnson 5. Cicely Murfitt	

Employment Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
Val Barrett Pippa Corney Simon Edwards Ray Manning Alex Riley	Doug Cattermole Sebastian Kindersley Bridget Smith	Edd Stonham	

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
1. Ruth Betson 2. Grenville Chamberlain 3. Christopher Cross 4. Caroline Hunt 5. Des O'Brien		1. Neil Davies 2. Peter Johnson 3. Cicely Murfitt 4. Douglas de Lacey 5. Deborah Roberts	

Licensing Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
Val Barrett Ruth Betson Graham Cone Pippa Corney Kevin Cuffley Andrew Fraser Raymond Matthews Charles Nightingale Alex Riley	Anna Bradnam Jose Hales Janet Lockwood	Cicely Murfitt Deborah Roberts	Nigel Cathcart (seat accepted from Liberal Democrat Group)

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
1. Grenville Chamberlain 2. Mark Howell 3. Ray Manning 4. Bunty Waters 5. Nick Wright	1. Henry Batchelor 2. Hazel Smith	1. Douglas de Lacey 2. Peter Johnson 3. Neil Davies 4. Edd Stonham	

Partnerships Review Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
David Bard Andrew Fraser Ray Manning Tony Orgee Ben Shelton Bunty Waters	Henry Batchelor Janet Lockwood Ingrid Tregoin (seat accepted from Independent Group)		

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
1. Val Barrett 2. Grenville Chamberlain 3. Simon Crocker 4. Roger Hall 5. David McCraith	1. Tumi Hawkins 2. Aidan Van de Weyer	Substitutes: 1. Neil Davies 2. Peter Johnson 3. Douglas de Lacey 4. Deborah Roberts 5. Edd Stonham	

Planning Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Non-Group
David Bard Brian Burling Pippa Corney Kevin Cuffley David McCraith Des O'Brien Tim Scott Robert Turner	John Batchelor Philippa Hart Sebastian Kindersley	Deborah Roberts	

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Labour
1. Val Barrett 2. Roger Hall 3. Charles Nightingale 4. Alex Riley 5. Nick Wright	1. Henry Batchelor 2. Anna Bradnam 3. Doug Cattermole 4. Hazel Smith 5. Aidan Van de Weyer	1. Cicely Murfitt 2. Douglas de Lacey 3. Peter Johnson 4. Edd Stonham 5. Neil Davies	

Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Labour
David Bard Ruth Betson Grenville Chamberlain Graham Cone Kevin Cuffley Tony Orgee	Jose Hales Philippa Hart Tumi Hawkins (seat accepted from Independent Group)		

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Labour
1. Val Barrett 2. Christopher Cross 3. Roger Hall 4. Andrew Fraser 5. David Whiteman-Downes	1. John Batchelor 2. Anna Bradnam 3. Doug Cattermole	1. Neil Davies 2. Peter Johnson 3. Douglas de Lacey 4. Edd Stonham 5. Deborah Roberts	

Joint Development Control Committee – Cambridge Fringes

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Labour
David Bard * Kevin Cuffley Charles Nightingale Robert Turner * Spokesman	Aidan Van de Weyer	Douglas de Lacey	

Substitutes in hierarchical order

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent	Labour
1. Tom Bygott 2. Pippa Corney 3. Tim Wotherspoon	1. Janet Lockwood 2. Doug Cattermole	1. Neil Davies 2. Edd Stonham	

- (c) The appointment of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of committees, as follows:

Committee	Chairman	Vice-Chairman
Audit and Corporate Governance	Andrew Fraser	Grenville Chamberlain
Civic Affairs	David McCraith	Charles Nightingale
Employment	Ray Manning	Val Barrett
Licensing	Alex Riley	Raymond Matthews
Partnerships Review	Ben Shelton	Bunty Waters
Planning	Pippa Corney	David Bard
Scrutiny and Overview	Tony Orgee	Kevin Cuffley

- d) The re-appointment of Grant Osbourn as the Council's Lead Independent Person and Gillian Holmes as the Council's Deputy Independent Person for a further two years, subject to annual ratification.

13. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS 2017/18

Council considered a report setting out appointments to the Combined Authority for the 2017/18 municipal year. It was noted that the allocation of places available on the non-executive committees was in accordance with the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2016, which required the membership of these committees to reflect, as far as reasonably practical, the balance of the political parties of the constituent councils when taken together.

Council agreed to:

- a) **APPROVE** appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for 2017/18 as set out below:

Combined Authority

Councillor Peter Topping

Substitute: Councillor Nick Wright

Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor Andrew Fraser

Substitute: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain

Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Alex Riley

Councillor John Batchelor

Substitutes:

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain (substitute for Councillor Riley)

Councillor Philippa Hart (substitute for Councillor Batchelor)

- b) **AUTHORISE** the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, to make amendments to the appointments to the Audit and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if the political balance of the Combined Authority changes between now and the next Council meeting.

14. ERMINE STREET HOUSING LTD.

Councillor Andrew Fraser proposed the re-appointment of Stephen Hills as Director of the Council's housing company, Ermine Street Housing Limited. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Richard Turner.

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Stephen Hills as Director of the Council's housing company, Ermine Street Housing Limited, for a further 12 months alongside his role as Director of Housing for the Council.

15. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Councillor Simon Edwards proposed the re-appointment of Simon Harris as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ray Manning.

Council unanimously **AGREED** the re-appointment of Simon Harris as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel, for a further three years, once his current term of office expired on 1st July 2017.

16. JOINT SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Councillor Tony Orgee proposed receipt of the joint Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Partnerships Review Committee Annual Report for 2016/17. Councillor Ben Shelton seconded the proposal.

In introducing the report Councillor Orgee drew attention to the work done by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee during the year. He drew attention to the role of the Committee in scrutinising the proposed budget before it was presented to Council for approval. In response, some Members raised concerns about the operation of the committees, including reference to:

- Appointing Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen from opposition groups; which some Members suggested was good practice.
- The need to ensure Members of Committees received appropriate training to ensure they had the necessary skills to undertake this role.
- Being clear about what the committees had achieved and how their work had added value.

Council agreed to **RECEIVE** the joint Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Partnerships Review Committee Annual Report for 2016/17.

17. CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Councillor Sue Ellington proposed receipt of the Civic Affairs Committee Annual Report for 2016/17. Councillor Charlie Nightingale seconded the proposal.

In introducing the report Councillor Ellington drew attention to the work done by the Civic Affairs Committee during the year. She drew particular attention to the significant amount of work that had gone into the District boundary review, which had been broadly accepted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Council agreed to **RECEIVE** the Civic Affairs Committee Annual Report for 2016/17.

18. CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

On the nomination of Councillor Peter Topping, seconded by Councillor Ben Shelton and there being no further nominations, Council **AGREED** that Councillor Kevin Cuffley be appointed as the Council's substitute member on the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel.

19. MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUP LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, presented her annual statement.

Councillor Smith congratulated those Members who had been successful in the recent County Council elections. She focussed on the importance of giving Members the tools to do their jobs well and with pride. This included reference to:

- Access to 'Insite' and regularly updated lists of officers, their responsibilities and contact details;
- A timely response to e-mails and phone calls;
- An effective pre-application service and a planning portal that was fit for purpose;

- An economic strategy which Members could reference when supporting local businesses;
- Portfolio Holders who held portfolio meetings which gave backbench Members and residents opportunities to question and challenge them;
- Scrutiny Committees that were established on best practice principles and were robust, challenging and added value; and
- A stable workforce with officers that were not overstretched.

Councillor Smith highlighted the importance of having a Council which could protect Parishes and keep them safe. She expressed concern about the impact of out of control, unplanned development. She informed the Council that over the next twelve months the residents of South Cambridgeshire would be left in no doubt where the blame for the destruction of their villages lay.

Council **NOTED** the Major Opposition Group Leader's Annual Statement.

20. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION UNDER ARTICLE 15.03

Council **NOTED** changes made under the provisions of Article 15.03 of the Constitution, which authorised the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Monitoring Officer, to agree and incorporate into the Constitution factual changes and changes required by new legislation which the Council had no choice but to make.

21. WRITE OFF OF OUTSTANDING DEBTS

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing presented a report which notified Council of debts written off under powers delegated to the Portfolio Holder and Chief Finance Officer. This was being reported in line with the requirements of the Constitution. Councillor Edwards proposed that the Council note the report. Councillor Nick Wright seconded the proposal.

Council agreed to **NOTE** details of the amounts of debt written off under delegated powers.

22. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS - RECOMMENDATION FROM CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Councillor Sue Ellington Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee proposed that Council amend Standing Order 11.4 in Part 4 of the Constitution to allow Members to ask questions at Council without giving notice, within a maximum period of 30 minutes. This had been recommended by the Committee at its meeting on 23rd March 2017. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Bridget Smith.

Council unanimously **AGREED** that Council Standing Order 11.4 in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution be amended to allow Members to ask questions at Council without giving notice, within a maximum period of 30 minutes.

23. EXTENSION TO SIX MONTH RULE

On the proposal of Councillor Peter Topping, seconded by Councillor Robert Turner, Council **APPROVED** an extension of the six month rule for Councillor Mick Martin on ill-health grounds until 27th January 2018 and expressed its best wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

24. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

a) Councillor Aidan van de Weyer

Councillor van de Weyer asked the following question:

‘What factors do the Leader and the Portfolio Holder consider to represent threats to the Cambridge Green Belt?’

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning replied:

‘I was a panelist in London at the end of January. Constraint on development is a big issue for London and in the light of calls for a rational approach to release, namely that taking 2% out of the London Green Belt could yield 400,000 houses, I had been asked to speak about our local experience fifteen years ago of releasing Green Belt land for Cambridge Southern Fringe, Cambridge East, NIAB and North West Cambridge.

In fact I am a passionate defender of the Cambridge Green Belt. As you know, only a small part of this is inside Cambridge City. The rest takes up about a quarter of our administrative area, and a little spills over into East Cambridgeshire to the north east of the city.

Responses to public consultations indicate that the Green Belt is valued equally by residents on both sides of the City Council boundary.

There is a key distinction to be drawn between a modern city with a historic core, of which there are many examples throughout the world, and a compact historic city – where the historic core is large relative to the overall size of the city. This feature, not held by many places other than Cambridge, is a central component of the unique selling point of Cambridge in competing on the global stage for knowledge-intensive businesses seeking high quality of life, to appeal to the kind of footloose talent on which our economic success depends.

Turning to the specifics of the question, first of all I wouldn't use the word 'threats'. Green Belt is a positive use of land (to preserve the setting of the City and to prevent coalescence), but occasionally parts of it may have to yield to other positive uses of land, in exceptional circumstances at Local Plan stage, or very special circumstances through a planning application – of which a recent example is the hospice development at the Babraham Park and Ride site.

I mentioned the releases in the last round of plan-making. In the current submission we are proposing very limited releases of Green Belt for housing at Histon and Impington and Sawston, for example, some of our most sustainable villages. Agents and developers are challenging the omission of their land at Green Belt sites in Great Shelford, Fulbourn, Comberton, Histon and Impington, Sawston, Girton and so on, and the Inspector has scheduled examination hearings on these in June.

There are also challenges on a larger scale, some much larger, from promoters of land north of Barton Road, at Trumpington Meadows, between the M11 and Shelford Road, between Cambridge Road and Fulbourn Road and around Fen Ditton. The examinations on these will occur in July.

In terms of employment land, we made an initial allocation to release some Green Belt land close to Peterhouse Technology Park, home to ARM. The Cambridge

Inner Green Bely Boundary Study (that we commissioned from LDA Design following suspension of the Local Plan examinations) recommended a slight contraction of this allocation – but also an additional small scale release south of Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The Councils accepted both these recommendations in the revised submission to the Inspector. However, Jesus College, Pigeon and others have been vigorously pushing a new science park and associated development at Cambridge South, enlisting many people in high places to advance their cause.

The Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans take a balanced growth approach to housing sites allocated: inside Cambridge, on the edges, in new settlements and limited growth in bigger villages. That is what the public overwhelmingly told us they preferred.

We contend that the submitted Local Plans are sound. Nevertheless, it is conceivably possible that the Inspector could be persuaded by counter arguments being made loudly, including by people in this chamber.

Even after adoption of the new Local Plans, rates of construction in locations other than the City fringes might fall short of the housing trajectory, and that could raise the pressure of calls to expand Cambridge.

With regard to the current rich climate of interest in strategic planning – the Housing White Paper, the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's non statutory Spatial Plan (on which point by the way I am delighted that the Combined Authority is held by Councillor Lewis Herbert, Leader of Cambridge City Council) the National Infrastructure Commission's enthusiasm for an Oxford to Cambridge expressway (which might offer an opportunity to provide the missing links at the Girton interchange), east west rail and a Cambridge south station at Addenbrookes (which may require a new track laid in the Hobson's Brook corridor (which in my opinion is by far the most eloquent gateway to Cambridge, and possibly the most beautiful, apart from the riverside approaches of Grantchester Meadows and Ditton Meadows)): be assured that we will be drawing up a very long term vision, initially to 2050, for sharing prosperity throughout Greater Cambridge, and I expect the sequential approach to site allocations to be the starting point again. However, I have no doubt that there will be vigorous public debate about the balance to be struck – of the kind I referred to earlier – in the next iteration of the Local Plan, which of course we have already committed through the City Deal to prepare jointly with Cambridge City Council.

Councillor van de Weyer asked a supplementary question of the Planning Portfolio Holder about leaflets issued at a number of public meeting and hustings events which referred to building on the Green Belt. He asked whether the Conservative Group's proposals included a busway across the Green Belt.

In response, Councillor Robert Turner stated that this was a politically motivated statement which went outside the scope of the original question.

b) Councillor Hazel Smith

Councillor Smith asked the following question:

'Councillors' access to the intranet (Insite) is now completely impossible. Our needs are not complicated, but lack of access means we Councillors cannot do our job in an efficient way, to save officers' time. In particular we need a phone book with officers' extension numbers and roles (preferably in a form that we can sort on roles,

to see who is in which department). We also all need access to the confidential pages in committee and portfolio meeting reports, which are not available on the public website. Please could the Portfolio Holder tell us what plans there are to improve Councillors' access to information?'

Councillor Nick Wright, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business and Customer Services replied that unfortunately it had been necessary to turn off remote access to the intranet (Insite) although it was still possible to access it from South Cambridgeshire Hall. A new system was planned and would be available in the autumn. This would take into account Members' needs informed by feedback from the Office 365 pilot which had been running since January. In the meantime Democratic Services staff were available to help Members with officer and other key contact information.

c) Councillor Aidan van de Weyer

Councillor van de Weyer asked the following question:

'Is the Leader concerned that none of the most senior members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is from the Greater Cambridge area?'

In response, Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council drew attention to the fact that Councillor Lewis Herbert, Leader of Cambridge City Council held the Strategic Planning Portfolio and he held the New Homes and Communities Portfolio. In addition the Combined Authority Board worked very much as a team to address issues from the perspective of the whole area.

d) Councillor Sebastian Kindersley

Councillor Kindersley asked the following question:

'Now that Councillor Ellington has been appointed to the Cabinet, can the Leader of the Council explain how the Special Responsibility Allowances are affected?'

In response, Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council stated that it would make no difference.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Kindersley asked if the budget would remain the same.

In response, Councillor Topping replied 'yes'.

e) Councillor Ben Shelton

Councillor Shelton asked the following question:

'Will the Council consider purchasing The Tree Public House in Stapleford?'

In response, Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Business and Customer Services confirmed that this would be the subject of a report to his next Portfolio Holder meeting in July.

f) Councillor Deborah Roberts

Councillor Roberts asked the following question:

‘Can the Planning Portfolio Holder inform Members when they will receive a briefing on the recent Supreme Court judgment regarding the five year land supply?’

In response, Councillor Robert Turner. Planning Portfolio Holder replied that written information would be circulated to all Members and a briefing arranged as soon as possible.

25. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council **NOTED** engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council since the last Council meeting, subject to the addition of raising the flag for St George's Day.

The Meeting ended at 5.40 p.m.
