

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 28 September 2017 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Beverly Agass	Chief Executive
	Alex Colyer	Executive Director (Corporate Services)
	Rory McKenna	Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer

PRESENTATION

A presentation was given by a representative of Macmillan Cancer Support, one of the Chairman's charities.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Simon Crocker, Lynda Harford, Phillipa Hart, Sebastian Kindersley, Mick Martin, Robert Turner and David Whiteman-Downes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were reported:

- Councillor Douglas de Lacey declared an interest in agenda item 10 as he had been a member of the task and finish group looking at Neighbourhood Planning.
- Councillor John Batchelor declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to matters concerning the Combined Authority as he was Chairman of its Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Andrew Fraser declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to matters concerning the Combined Authority as he was a member of its Audit and Governance Committee.

3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

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

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th May were confirmed as a correct

record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following:

- In response to a question from Councillor Anna Bradnam, Councillor Sue Ellington confirmed that Dogs for the Disabled had changed its name to Dogs for Good during the year. The minutes of the meeting would be amended to reflect this.
- In response to a question from Councillor Douglas de Lacey it was confirmed that the total amount of time available for all questions asked under Standing Order 11 was 30 minutes. This included questions submitted under notice and those submitted at the meeting. The resolution in minute 22 would be amended to clarify this.

Councillors Douglas de Lacey and Councillor Anna Bradnam queried the appointment of substitute members to committees as set out in minute 12, recommendation 12(a). Following the meeting, this information was checked and it was confirmed that the minutes reflected the list of appointments tabled at the meeting, which in turn reflected instructions received from Groups. Copies of relevant correspondence was supplied to those concerned.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman of Council made the following announcements:

- The Chairman's reception was being held at Wimpole Hall on November 3rd 2017. All Members should have received an invitation and he hoped there would be a good turnout of Councillors this year.
- The Chairman formally introduced the new Chief Executive, Beverly Agass, who was attending her first Council meeting.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, drew Council's attention to the following matters:

- He recently attended a discussion with the National Infrastructure Commission in London, which followed on from a meeting the Chief Executive and he had with them in July. The Commission's role was to advise Government on major chunks of infrastructure and its particular interest was the Oxford-Cambridge "corridor". He had taken the opportunity to remind them that we were also interested in the ability of people to access in and around our district and to get into the City centre. He believed they took that point on board.
- On a lighter note, he congratulated Councillor Nigel Cathcart, who he understood had recently had a beer named after him, which would be available from Wetherspoon's outlets for the next two weeks.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the public had been received.

7. PETITIONS

No petitions for consideration by Council had been received.

8. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

It was proposed by Councillor Peter Topping, seconded by Councillor Charles Nightingale and approved unanimously, that Councillor Simon Crocker replace Councillor Nick Wright as a member of the Civic Affairs Committee.

9. SINGLE SHARED WASTE SERVICE - SCDC RECYCLING SERVICE CHANGES

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, drew Council's attention to the recent Cabinet decision to change the South Cambridgeshire Recycling Service so that all recycling would be collected in the blue bin, bringing to an end the separate collection of paper in a caddy box. Councillor Howell explained the rationale, details of which were set out in the report circulated with the Council agenda.

Council's views were sought on the best way of communicating these changes to residents and communities in order to ensure a smooth and effective service transition. A summary of the comments made is set out below:

- Councillor John Batchelor commented on the need to inform residents about this as a matter of urgency as he suspected the changes were already being implemented. His caddy had been taken away earlier that week without notice and when he enquired about it he was told he wasn't going to get another one.
- Councillor Douglas de Lacey expressed disquiet about the last paragraph of the report [page 24 of the agenda pack] which stated that co-mingling may lead to reduced quality of recyclates, however close working with resident and MAF should be able to ensure material quality. He was not sure what was meant by close working with residents but he could not imagine waste staff would have time to talk to residents and go through their bins to explain what they shouldn't have recycled. He was concerned that 'may lead' would almost certainly become 'will lead'. Communication was the key and Councillor de Lacey echoed Councillor Batchelor's comments about this needing to be done quickly and properly. Girton, had been part of the trial and was already managing without caddies. Councillor de Lacey commented that the way the changes had been introduced there had been absolutely appalling as a result of confusing and contradictory communications. The Council's response to complaints from residents about caddies which had been removed without notice was to arrange delivery of a replacement caddy; which they could not use. This was a gross waste of resources. He asked that this time Council departments communicated with each other before it worried about communication with the wider public.
- Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer confirmed that he and many other Members had spoken to parish councils about the planned change and had included information on this in their reports. He suggested that it would be helpful if officers could provide a form of words or image that could be submitted for inclusion in parish magazines and other relevant publications. It would be extremely helpful if this could include an explanation of why the changes were being made, as his experience had been that when this was explained to the parish councils they were much more receptive to it.
- Councillor Sue Ellington asked whether there would continue to be communal bins in car parks and other central places where people could dispose of paper.
- Councillor Graham Cone asked what residents could do with the caddies once they were no longer in use. Would they be collected or would they be left to dispose of them themselves if they no longer required them? On a related matter, Councillor Janet Lockwood asked whether the caddies would end up going to landfill. She commented that not all residents would want to keep and use their caddies and suggested that residents should be advised that if they no longer wanted their caddy they should put them in the blue bin.
- Councillor Ruth Betson asked if it was possible to provide some text suitable for use on social media. She commented that she supported the change and asked how many parishes had already adopted the new arrangements and did not use

caddies.

- Councillor Tumi Hawkins stated that having schooled her kids to put all paper in the caddy to get the most out of it, she was disappointed that we were doing away with it.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts was concerned that the Council should not solely rely on parish newsletters to inform residents about the change. She suggested some parish councils might be willing to deliver leaflets if they were provided, but stressed that it was unreasonable to expect them to finance, produce and deliver information about something that was this Council's responsibility.

Councillor Howell thanked everyone for their input and acknowledged the need to get on with the communication process as soon as possible. He explained that Cambourne, Girton and Oakington had participated in the trial and apologised to Councillor de Lacey that in some cases things had clearly not gone as well as they should have. Councillor Howell welcomed suggestions about providing standard text for publication and social media and would take this on board. With reference to parish councils, he acknowledged Councillor Roberts' comments. The plan was for leaflets to be left with every bin explaining the changes.

Councillor Howell confirmed that communal bins would remain in car parks and other sites for at least a year. Separate collection would also continue to take place from the underground bins provided at the new development in North West Cambridge as this had formed part of the agreement with the University. With reference to caddies, he stressed that it was not possible to recycle the caddies because they were hard plastic and if a significant number of households opted to do this it would result in exceeding the contamination rate at the depot. Residents were being asked to use them or take them to the recycling centre where there was a hard plastic recycling facility.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council outlined work being done to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Planning in South Cambridgeshire and outlined the work of the Neighbourhood Planning Task and Finish Group, details of which were set out in the report circulated with the Council agenda. Councillor Topping drew attention to the consultation with Parish Councils that had begun on 18th September. He thanked Councillors de Lacey, Hales and Cathcart who had helped Councillor Turner on the task and finish group that had produced the recommendations.

Commenting on the number of Neighbourhood Plans submitted, Councillor Topping stated that he expected the number to increase. This was due to the economic pressures that pertained in the area. He emphasised that the whole point of a Neighbourhood Plan was not to stop development, but to allow communities to comment on the placement of planned schemes. The Council had increased officer capacity to support this work, including providing help for parishes undertaking technical assessments and referenda. It was also proposed to set up a parish sounding board which would help spread best practice and enable those parishes starting this work to learn from the experience of others.

Councillors were invited to comment on the proposed future actions. A summary of the comments made is set out below:

- Councillor Deborah Roberts commented that unfortunately this had come at a most inopportune time. Foxton Parish Council had started this process and she expressed thanks to officers who had been providing support. She had no complaints about the idea or how officers had progressed it. However, she could not confidently recommend other parishes give up their precious time and

resources to do this. She had no confidence in the Planning Department to listen to what parishes were saying and commented that, as a result parishes had lost confidence in the planning process. Parishes spent a lot of time commenting on applications yet only 6% of requests by parishes to have applications come to the Planning Committee actually get there. Councillor Roberts urged the new Chief Executive and lead Members to take steps to address this.

- Councillor Bridget Smith recalled that she had been calling for the Council to provide support for Neighbourhood Planning since 2012. Commenting on the consultation exercise, she had spoken to one of her Parish Clerks, who had been involved in the work of the task and finish group, about this and was disappointed to hear that they had received the document only 48 hours before the deadline for comments. She was also concerned that the Council was recommending that parishes employed planning consultants and suggested this was against the whole ethos of Neighbourhood Plans which were meant to be community led. With reference to grants, Councillor Smith commented that she had been informed that parishes didn't need money as this was already there to be had through localities funds, but what was needed was people to support this work and she urged the Council had to resource this properly. It was important that the Council was able to deliver its promises. She suggested that advice be sought from an authority that was doing this well and had managed to get all its villages' Neighbourhood Plans done without breaking the bank. She was concerned that the Council was trying to absolve itself of its responsibilities and this was not good enough.
- Councillor Douglas de Lacey commented on the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan. As part of the Task and Finish Group's discussions it had been suggested that the Local Plan would be 'light' with the detail provided in the Neighbourhood Plans. He stated that the implications of that were obvious in that all parishes would have to have a Neighbourhood Plan and would have to be bullied into doing it despite the lack of resource which Councillor Smith in her comments had very rightly underlined. He asked what the Cabinet thought about the relationship between the two and asked that this be clearly embedded in information given to any Parish Council that was thinking about doing a Neighbourhood Plan for themselves.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins thanked the Task and Finish Group for the work it had done. She recalled that back in 2011/12 the Council was actively discouraging Parishes from doing Neighbourhood Plans but she was glad to see that Cabinet was now encouraging this. She was concerned that it was a bit too late as had Parishes been encouraged to do this earlier we would have avoided lots of speculative development coming forward and planning appeals. With reference to the availability of a grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government, Councillor Hawkins noted that this was available once a Neighbourhood Plan had been through examination and a referendum date set. She asked who would fund work in advance of this stage in the process.
- Councillor Anna Bradnam indicated she supported comments made by Councillor Smith. She had observed that some of the Parishes that were struggling to produce a Neighbourhood Plan were having enormous difficulties because of the complexities of the planning requirements that were already pending in their villages. In some cases it might be appropriate to decide that a Neighbourhood Plan was not the right way forward because there was too much going on already for it all to fit together.
- Councillor Tony Orgee commented that reflecting on his own experience in working on the Great Abington Neighbourhood Plan, he did not recognise the negativity being expressed by others. The Parish Council had been extremely grateful for the help and support it had received from this Council. The process was now well underway and they had employed a planning consultant. However to suggest this this was not a locally led process was quite wrong. The policies

were being developed by the Parish Council and the role of the planning consultant was to help put this into appropriate language; facilitating the process not driving it.

- Councillor Francis Burkitt confirmed that there were other options available and recalled the project vision brought to the Council by Barton Ward in 2011 which was equivalent to a light touch Neighbourhood Plan. The benefit of this was getting the Parish Councils working together to identify what they wanted for the area and to form a vision.
- Councillor Nick Wright, responding to comments from Councillor Hawkins, commented that it was never Cabinet's intention to discourage Neighbourhood Plans, but what was on offer at the time was an opportunity to include what the Parishes wanted in the Local Plan. Time had moved on and the Local Plan had been written, incorporating some proposals from Parishes. It was therefore now appropriate to progress initiatives in other areas through the Neighbourhood Planning route.
- Councillor Nigel Cathcart commented on resources and hoped that resources would not be taken away from the Local Plan or other areas to concentrate on Neighbourhood Plans. And resource provided should be in addition to that currently available.

11. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

Council noted reports prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority summarising the work of the Authority during June and July. There was no report for August as there had been no meetings. The September report would be issued at the end of the month and would be circulated as part of the agenda for the next Council meeting. The Council's representatives on the Combined Authority were invited to comment on the reports, details of which are summarised below:

- Councillor Andrew Fraser, a member of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee reported that the inaugural meeting had taken place on 26th June and had considered a number of procedural matters.
- Councillor Alex Riley, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, was pleased to report that it was clear the committee intended to hold the Combined Authority to account and hoped that this would continue. In addition to the three scheduled meetings an additional meeting had taken place to call in the Authority's decisions on staffing. Councillor Fraser highlighted some issues to resolve concerning transparency but overall the Committee was making progress.
- Councillor John Batchelor, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew attention to the call in of the proposed officer and staffing structure, which he felt was quite significant and had potential serious implications for our own organisation. He explained that the call in was on the basis of an increase in the staffing budget by 25% over the course of two meetings. It was clear that the original budget had been based on information that turned out to be incorrect. The underlying concern that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had was not about the appointment of staff, but that the Combined Authority's Cabinet was making decisions on the basis of very little information and with very little officer support. The question was whether in those circumstances the Cabinet was making informed decisions. Councillor Batchelor noted that although the questions about the staffing budget were ultimately answered, there remained concerns about support. There were currently only four officers employed by the Combined Authority with the rest of the work being done by officers seconded from constituent Councils. If and when the new arrangement is put in place there will only be fifteen officers employed by the Combined Authority. Councillor

Batchelor commented that although everyone was keen on having lean authorities it was important to ensure there was sufficient oversight of how public money was being spent. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would continue to pursue improved governance.

- Councillor Peter Topping, the Council's representative on the Combined Authority, commented that the scrutiny work referred to by Councillors Riley and Batchelor had been extremely helpful. He believed scrutiny had a valid function and in this case posed legitimate questions about the basis on which a decision had been made. He provided an update on a recent meeting, not covered by the reports, that had agreed bids to be submitted to Government for major infrastructure proposals and confirmed that this included a bid for £193 million to sort out the brownfield site around Cambridge North to enable housing to be built there. This included the Milton Pond site. One of the consequences of housing being built there was that in terms of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the pressure on villages it would not be necessary to build as many houses in villages because they were being built at the waterworks. The bid would now be considered by Government. Councillor Topping added that the Combined Authority had also signed off a number of smaller bids for infrastructure and he was pleased to report that one of those was a proposition to do something about Cambourne High Street, which he sincerely hoped would be approved.
- Referring to Overview and Scrutiny Committee's interview with the Mayor, Councillor Deborah Roberts asked if future reports could contain more information about what was said and suggested a list of bullet points was not very informative about what the Mayor intended to do about these matters. Councillor Topping undertook to pass comments on to the Combined Authority and ask for better quality reports in future.

12. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

12 (a) Question from Councillor Ben Shelton to the Leader of the Council

Please can you tell us what this Council has done to support villages and Parish Council's whose land has been occupied by gypsies and travellers?

In response Councillor Howell, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services confirmed that there had been some illegal encampments recently which had involved working with landowners, the County Council and Police in order to review the policies we have. A briefing note had been produced explaining how to deal with illegal encampments. This had been sent to Parish Councils and all Councillors. Work was also being done with Traveller Groups try and minimise the impact on communities. Councillor Howell took the opportunity to thank staff involved in this work, particularly those who had worked on site clean-up.

12 (b) Question from Councillor Ruth Betson to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Betson's question asked for an update on the number and progress of Neighbourhood Plans in the district and she indicated this had been answered in the context of the discussion on agenda item 10.

12 (c) Question from Councillor Ray Manning to the Leader of the Council

Please can you explain why we no longer need paper caddies. Is it possible to dispense with them without damaging our recycling rates? What savings could be made by the Council if paper is placed directly in the blue bin?

In response, Councillor Howell, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services replied that in addition to the information already reported under agenda item 9, he confirmed that the changeover date would be 11th December and this would be promoted primarily through the South Cambridgeshire magazine.

12 (d) Question from Councillor Charlie Nightingale to the Leader of the Council

After the terrible Grenfell fire please could the Council set up a task and finish group to look at how this council deals with safety and emergency planning?

In response, Councillor Howell, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services replied that the Council had undertaken a full range of checks on its properties to ensure they met fire safety standards and no problems had been identified. The Department for Communities and Local Government had tasked the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to undertake checks on all buildings over eight storeys as these posed the highest risk. However this did not apply locally as there were no residential buildings over five storeys in South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Howell explained that South Cambridgeshire had a detailed emergency plan shared with Cambridge City Council. This was regularly updated and tested. Training exercises to test readiness and responsiveness was planned for November and January. The Leader of the Council and Councillor Howell had been asked to take part in this exercise. At Chief Executive and Director level the Council was part of the Local Resilience Forum whose role it was to co-ordinate work across agencies.

With reference to the specific suggestion that a task and finish group be set up, Councillor Howell commented that it would be better if all Members got involved to support their parishes and villages to develop emergency response plans in the event of an emergency. The Council could then work with them to draw on local knowledge and expertise.

12 (e) Question from Councillor Bridget Smith to the Greater Cambridge Partnership Portfolio Holder

Does the Portfolio Holder for the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) believe that the widely predicted 1% in modal shift from car to bus is sufficient justification for building an off road Busway from Cambourne to Cambridge City?

In response, Councillor Francis Burkitt, Portfolio Holder for the GCP, commented that the GCP had been consulting about a potential Cambridge to Cambourne busway to support the local Plans for the past two or three years. He confirmed there would be public consultation during November on two on road and one off road route. Councillor Burkitt noted that the question was about the off road option and explained he was not prepared to talk about one option in particular as he did not want to predetermine the ultimate decision which would be taken by the GCP Executive Board. This would take account of the outcome of the public consultation and a significant amount of relevant data to be collated over the next six months. This included the GCP's 'Big Conversation' which was a huge data gathering exercise to feed into the decision making process.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Smith asked below what level of modal shift would an off road busway be deemed non-feasible?

In response, Councillor Burkitt replied that he was unable to answer that question without notice.

12 (f) Question from Councillor Philippa Hart to the Leader of the Council

The Chairman reported that unfortunately Councillor Hart was not present to ask her question as she had been taken ill. He had however agreed that the question be put in her absence.

Concern has been expressed by members of the Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee about the workload of all CA Board members, particularly those who are portfolio holders. Cllr Topping, as leader of our council, is a Board Member and is the CA Portfolio Holder for Housing. He combines these positions with his role as a County Councillor where despite assuring us that he would not take on any additional responsibilities, he is now Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and sits on the Constitution and Ethics and Health committees. Please could Cllr Topping inform members how he apportions his time between his many and varied responsibilities and in particular what percentage of his time does he devote to leadership of this Council?

In response, Councillor Peter Topping replied that he carried out a number of roles, primarily Leader of this Council and the Housing Portfolio Holder for the Combined Authority. He was also Chairman of the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Committee. Also he maintained what he hoped was a strong connection with Parish Councils in his patch and across this district. He was sure that Members would agree that there was nothing more important to quality of life than good health, good housing, good jobs and local amenities. It was his aim in assuming these different roles to ensure that the voice of South Cambridgeshire communities was heard and represented on vital issues, such as health and wellbeing, housing and prosperity and to make the case for continuing to respect the value the Council placed on the special features of its villages. Councillor Topping commented that he believed the work that he did ensures that he had a seat at the table and exert influence on decision makers. In summary he respectfully suggested that the responsibilities he undertook were not entirely separate but were overlapping and complementary because in carrying them out he did his utmost to represent the views of our residents and the views of this Council and its Members at all times. Councillor Topping, in conclusion stated that he looked to ensure that the future of South Cambridgeshire was as best as it possible could be and he did that with 100% commitment, 100% of the time.

12 (g) Question from Councillor Aiden Van de Weyer to the Planning Portfolio Holder

The recent performance report to Cabinet describes the decline in satisfaction in the planning service to the unacceptably low level of just 58% in June. The figures, however, are based on a very small number of responses. What is the Planning Portfolio Holder doing to investigate the genuine level of dissatisfaction with the planning service, what the reasons for dissatisfaction are, and what can be done to improve service levels?

Councillor Nick Wright, on behalf of the Planning Portfolio Holder, confirmed that the 58% approval rating was taken from the first quarterly performance report. The formal feedback that the service received was based on the outcome of the post application survey that was sent out. Response rates were relatively low and as the reported survey only involved 20 applications and it was difficult to draw a representative conclusion from such a small sample. The information was however taken very seriously. In addition to considering responses from applicants through the post decision survey process users were engaged through a number of channels. This included Councillor Turner's biannual agents' forum meetings, now shared with the City Council. In addition all Members received feedback on planning matters from time to time and Councillor Turner took the opportunity to speak to a variety of people, including representatives of parish

councils at regular planning forums. Councillor Wright added that earlier in the year the planning service held an open day which it was hoped would become an annual event.

In addition the planning service had recently looked to apply additional focus to engage with people contacting the Council about planning matters and the business support team now has a dedicated officer focused on investigating and responding to people who contact the service to address concerns about performance. The commitment to a shared planning service with the City Council would also provide opportunities to improve resilience, capacity and consistency of approach.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Van de Weyer commented that it was useful to have hard data and asked what was being done to improve the amount and quantity of data available to assess service performance.

Councillor Wright replied that the Portfolio Holder was working with officers to enact changes very quickly and over the next couple of months Councillors would see this coming to the fore.

12 (h) Question from Councillor Henry Batchelor to the Planning Portfolio Holder

Could the Planning Portfolio Holder please tell us how many live planning applications the Council currently has awaiting decision?

Councillor Nick Wright, on behalf of the Planning Portfolio Holder, replied major applications on hand 67, minor applications on hand 192, other applications on hand 52, and 383 pre-planning applications. This was a substantial number and showed the pressure that this Council was under with volume of applications.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Batchelor asked if the leadership of this Council was concerned by these figures.

In response, Councillor Wright commented that of course they were and they were working as hard as possible to try and mitigate them.

12 (i) Question from Councillor Anna Bradnam to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing

Whilst I believe statutory training has been provided this year, there seems to have been little offered in the way of member development. Please would the Portfolio Holder advise if any training will be offered before the end of the financial year? In particular I would appreciate training about the recent changes in Data Protection.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, replied that in short the answer was yes. He confirmed that the focus had to be on providing regulatory training. With reference to more general training Councillor Edwards commented that there was a limited budget for structured training and all too often attendance was poor which meant that this was not a good use of resources. It was important to strike a balance. Training could take a number of formats, not just formal sessions. If a Member was interested in a particular topic they could always approach the relevant officer who would be only too happy to put some time aside to hold a one to one session.

12 (j) Question from Councillor Douglas de Lacey

We seem to be losing staff, particularly in certain services such as waste collection, significantly faster than we are recruiting. I assume the shortfall is being made up with

agency staff, rather than making the posts more attractive to encourage higher recruitment. Would the Portfolio Holder please tell us how much we have spent on agency staff this year, how that relates to what we would have paid permanent staff, and whether he feels this is value for money?

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, replied that his impressions were very similar in some ways, particularly in relation to sickness. He confirmed that sickness levels had gone up but was hopeful that by using the same methods as used in the past, this trend could be reversed.

In terms of staff turnover, Councillor Edwards commented that as an authority in the past there had been very low turnover, intentionally so. He recalled that some years ago the Single Status Agreement and associated job evaluations had resulted in a large number of staff taking a significant pay cut. The Council encouraged those members of staff to apply for more senior positions within the authority to get their salaries back up to where they were. This internal recruitment led to low levels of turnover. Councillor Edwards was of the view that this was the right thing to do at the time but the pendulum had now swung the other way. He commented that turnover was a good thing in that new blood brought in fresh ideas and new approaches. It was important to get the right balance. The Council's turnover in 2016/17 was 12.7%, compared to an average turnover rate in the UK of 15%, although this varied a lot between industries. Councillor Edwards confirmed that Council's turnover rate was a bit higher than he would like it, ideally he'd like to see it around 10%.

With reference to the use of agency staff, Councillor Edwards commented that the Council did use agency staff as this was necessary for it to be able to deliver essential services to its residents. Total spend on agency staff in 2016/17 was £328,000. The Waste Service had spent £270,000 on agency staff but had saved £263,000 on salaries, so the position was about break even. Given the need to deliver services, Councillor Edwards confirmed that he did feel this was value for money.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor de Lacey commented that he was encouraged by the answer, but was not convinced that the way to get people better off was to promote them so they could have higher salaries. He had suggested to the Portfolio Holder that when the Council offered people a salary increase, instead of a percentage increase it should divvy up the pot between all employees equally. That would do a lot to address the disparity that is increasing in our society today between the better off and the worse off.

In response to the comment about internal promotion Councillor Edwards replied that that has been a specific response to a certain set of circumstances and was not a general policy that had been adopted. Referring to the statement about staff salaries, he declined to comment at this moment in time as he was due to begin talking to Unions about the pay increase for next year and would rather not have that discussion in this chamber.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

13 (a) Motion from Councillor Tim Wotherspoon

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon moved the following motion as set out on the agenda, but indicated he wished to amend the wording by adding the words 'up to' before £50,000 in the last line:

This Council resolves to partner with the County Council, the City Council, the

Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (in the hope and expectation that they will each be willing to do so) to undertake a comprehensive review of bus services in and around the District and the wider area (and not just to/from Cambridge), in order to assess how significant short- and long-term improvements can be made for the benefit of our residents, employees, employers, students, patients, leisure-travellers and all others; and, to signal its keenness for this review to take place, and as soon as possible, hereby allocates £50,000 to co-fund such a review.

The motion was seconded by Councillor David Bard.

Speaking against the proposed motion, Councillor John Williams commented that in the context of the Council's budget, £50,000 was a significant amount of money and there were other things that this could be spent on that would have a direct benefit to residents. He added that a number of similar reviews were in the pipeline, including a County Council review of subsidised bus services. He suggested the motion had come about through naivety or a crude attempt to have this authority spend scarce tax payers money on a Conservative election gimmick. Councillor Bridget Smith supported the comments made and added that as a member of the GCP Joint Assembly she was aware of the work being done by the GCP as well as work planned by the Mayor. As the district council had no responsibility for public transport, she questioned why this was being proposed. She noted comments made by Councillor Edwards that the Council could not afford to provide anything other than the statutory minimum training for Members, so asked where this money was coming from. Councillor Van de Weyer commented that the Mayor was happy to advocate alternative forms of mass transport but was not convinced he was interested in bus services. Feedback from users confirmed there was significant concern about the impact of recent changes to rural bus services and in his opinion the fundamental problem was there was insufficient money to fund services following the removal of subsidies. He called for radical action including possible congestion charging, provided that the revenue was used to provide improved public transport. Councillor John Batchelor commented there were already too many fingers in this pie and this was clearly a matter for the Combined Authority. He saw no justification for this authority committing resources to support a review. Councillor Tumi Hawkins urged the Council to keep its money in South Cambridgeshire to do work for its own residents.

Councillor Deborah Roberts was unsure what it was hoped to get out of this and why the Council should be looking at spending £50,000 when the Mayor, who had lots of money, had already said he was going to do this. She commented on the success of rural transport schemes that took people where they wanted to go. The money would be better spent supporting this work.

Councillor Tom Bygott supported the motion as there were a number of issues related to bus services that needed to be addressed. It was important to do this in partnership. He suggested significant improvements could be achieved by coordinating bus and rail travel and integrated ticketing. He suggested this should be looked at by the review. Councillor Simon Edwards added that although the Council had no responsibility for public transport, it did have an obligation to its residents to secure improvements. By contributing resources to the review the Council would have an opportunity to steer how things were done. He suggested that the review should also look at improving real time information systems, including the number of seats available on buses. Councillor Sue Ellington commented on the work of the task and finish group on loneliness which was very often based on the fact that our elderly and young people were lonely because they couldn't get out. It was important to look at not just buses, but innovative ways of getting people out and about. Councillor Nigel Cathcart stated that he had some sympathy with

Councillor Ellington's comments but felt there was merit in having preliminary discussions before committing to a review and that the review should look much wider than just buses.

Councillor Deborah Roberts proposed amending the motion to hold this issue in abeyance until further discussions had taken place with the Mayor and the Combined Authority. Councillor Bridget Smith commented she would be happy to second it.

The Chairman suggested that the amendment could be out of order as it negated the original motion but asked Councillor Roberts to submit the wording of her amendment in writing. Before this could be done, the thirty minute time slot for debating the motion expired and the Chairman asked Councillor Wotherspoon as mover of the original motion to sum up.

Responding to the comments made, Councillor Wotherspoon emphasised that the County Council and Combined Authority were aware of the motion and stressed this was a contribution to a joint review. He supported comments about co-ordination of buses. He commented that a number of Members had suggested that this duplicated something being done elsewhere but confirmed that was not the case as the County Council review related specifically to Whippet services and the Mayor had not committed to doing a review. He was interested in comments made about real time bus information and agreed this would be a great way to take forward the outcome of the social isolation task and finish group. He concluded there had been a crescendo of criticism but finding the answer to the problem was not easy. Hopefully the review would address this.

A vote was taken on the original motion as amended by Councillor Wotherspoon and was cast as follows:

In favour (28) Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Ruth Betson, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against (17) Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Neil Davies, Jose Hales, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Abstain (1) Councillor Nigel Cathcart.

Therefore Council agreed the following motion:

This Council resolves to partner with the County Council, the City Council, the Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (in the hope and expectation that they will each be willing to do so) to undertake a comprehensive review of bus services in and around the District and the wider area (and not just to/from Cambridge), in order to assess how significant short- and long-term improvements can be made for the benefit of our residents, employees, employers, students, patients, leisure-travellers and all others; and, to signal its keenness for this review to take place, and as soon as possible, hereby allocates up to £50,000 to co-fund such a review.

13 (b) Motion from Councillor David Bard

Councillor David Bard moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Tom Bygott.

This Council notes with dismay the recent instruction to Network Rail by the DfT to remove electrification from the scope of the East West Rail project and instructs the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Transport requesting that electrification of this route be reinstated over its whole length.

In response to comments by Councillor John Williams, Councillor Bard agreed to the deletion of reference to the words 'Network Rail'. On being put to the vote, Council approved the following motion by affirmation:

This Council notes with dismay the recent instruction by the DfT to remove electrification from the scope of the East West Rail project and instructs the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Transport requesting that electrification of this route be reinstated over its whole length.

13 (c) Motion from Councillor Bridget Smith

Councillor Bridget Smith moved the following amendment which was duly seconded by Councillor Aiden Van de Weyer.

This Council supports the establishment of a member led Task and Finish working group, complimentary to the GCP, to look in more detail at the functionality of potential rural transport hubs within the District?

Speaking against the motion, Councillor Tim Wotherspoon on behalf of Councillor Francis Burkitt commented that the Council was an active partner in the Greater Cambridge Partnership. It has recently restructured to give its members greater voice through the creation of working groups to support portfolio holders to develop projects to take forward to the Joint Assembly and Board. Councillor Burkitt was supported by a group looking at the rural transport hubs project. Council was urged to support the structure set up by the Greater Cambridge Partnership and not create an additional group to duplicate that work.

A vote was taken on the motion and was cast as follows:

In favour (9) Councillors, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Tumi Hawkins, Cicely Murfitt, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Ingrid Tregoing, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Against (20) Councillors David Bard, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Mark Howell, David McCraith, Raymond Matthews, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

The motion was therefore declared rejected.

13 (d) Motion from Councillor Aiden Van de Weyer

Councillor Aiden Van de Weyer moved the following amendment which was duly seconded and agreed by affirmation:

This Council believes that local government decision making should take place in

an open and transparent manner, unless personal or commercial confidentiality requires otherwise.

This Council notes that attendees of a workshop of the Milton Road Local Liaison Forum on 19 September have been banned from filming, taking pictures or tweeting.

This Council requests that the Greater Cambridge Partnership, of which this Council is a constituent member, removes all such restrictions on material that is not commercially confidential.

14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council noted those engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman since the last meeting.

The Meeting ended at 5.35 p.m.
