

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 22 February 2018 at 2.00 p.m.

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

**Councillors:** David Bard, Henry Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

<b>Officers:</b>	Beverly Agass	Chief Executive
	Alex Colyer	Executive Director – Corporate Services
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Barrett, John Batchelor, Francis Burkitt, Doug Cattermole, Neil Davies, Jose Hales, Douglas de Lacey, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David Whiteman-Downes and John Williams.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were made as follows:

- Councillor Brian Burling declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 8(d), Swavesey Byeway Rate, as a rate payer. He left the Chamber during discussion and voting on this item.
- Councillor Sue Ellington declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8(d), as a resident of Swavesey.
- Councillor Kevin Cuffley declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 8(a) (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions). He left the Chamber during discussion and voting on this item.

### **2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

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

### **3. MINUTES**

The Council received the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 January 2018 for confirmation as a correct record.

During consideration:-

- Councillor Tim Wotherspoon reported that he was the County Councillor for the Cottenham and Willingham Division, not Willingham and Over, and that minute 2

- (Declarations of Interest) should be amended accordingly.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley indicated that the question he had asked of the Leader in relation to the possible designation of the Council and the Leader's response was not recorded in minute 5 (Announcements) and therefore the minute should be amended to include this.
  - With respect to the fourth bullet point on page 7 of minute 9(b) (Community Governance Review for Willingham and Over), Councillor Sebastian Kindersley's recollection was that Councillor John Williams had said that if the boundary was changed the area of land in question *would* become a valuable piece of land with planning potential and asked that the minute be adjusted to reflect this. Councillor Kindersley also pointed out that it had come to light that when the Council had considered this item, an application had already been lodged with the Council and he was concerned that no one had said anything about this at the Council meeting.
  - Referring to her contribution recorded in the third bullet point on page 7 (minute 9(b)), Councillor Tumi Hawkins commented that the minute should be amended to replace "similar anomalies" with "similar *boundary* anomalies"
  - Councillor Sebastian Kindersley asked whether the Leader's response to Councillor Betson's supplementary question recorded at minute 11(c) on page 15 (Question from Councillor Ruth Betson) was correct. The Leader believed it was correct but the Chairman indicated that the clerk's notes would be reviewed.
  - With respect to minute 11(i) (Expiry of Question Time), Councillor Sebastian Kindersley stated that written responses to those questions which had not been dealt with in the meeting owing to the expiry of the thirty minutes allowed for questions, had not been circulated to all Members.
  - Also referring to minute 11(i), Councillor Deborah Roberts stated that the written response she had received from the Leader to her question, did not answer the question.
  - Councillor Tumi Hawkins noted that contributions from Councillors Cathcart and Hall had been omitted from minute 12 (c) on page 21 (Motion from Councillor Tumi Hawkins). She additionally commented that the proposition from Councillor Manning "That the question be now put" was not clearly recorded. The minute should therefore be amended accordingly.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chairman, subject to amendments to reflect accuracy where recorded above.

#### 4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked Members to note that an event to mark 100 years of the RAF would be held at South Cambridgeshire Hall on 25 May 2018 and that details would follow closer to the time.

Councillor Peter Topping, the Leader of the Council, reported on the visit on 16 February 2018 by Sir Oliver Letwin MP, who was leading the independent review into the gap between the number of planning permissions granted and homes built. Sir Oliver, together with civil servants and housing experts, had visited development sites in South Cambridgeshire and the City. The resultant report was expected to contain some specific recommendations to increase the speed of building by developers who had secured planning permission.

Councillor Nick Wright, Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader, announced that the current "Good" application that allowed Councillors to access Council emails on their iPads would expire soon and was being replaced by two

applications called “Boxer” and “Browser” giving access to email and the intranet respectively. Councillors who used the “Good” application were requested to contact the 3C ICT Service Desk team as soon as possible to arrange for the installation of the new applications on their devices.

## **5. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions from the public had been received.

## **6. PETITIONS**

No petitions for consideration by the Council had been received.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **7 (a) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions**

Councillor Alex Riley, the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, proposed the recommendation from the meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2018, which invited the Council to approve and adopt the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions. Councillor Riley noted that development of the policy had been the result of a significant amount of officer work, most notably by John Goodwin. The Licensing Committee had initially met in November 2017 to consider the draft policy, which had then been subject to public consultation. The Committee had met again to review the policy in the light of the results of the consultation. Councillor Riley was pleased to recommend the policy to the Council.

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Deborah Roberts, who concurred with Councillor Riley that the policy had been subject to thorough consideration by the Licensing Committee.

During discussion:

- Councillor Bridget Smith indicated that she was grateful to the Committee for taking account of comments she had made in relation to executive travel. She additionally noted that all Members of the Council had received an email from a hackney carriage driver expressing concerns about some of the proposals in the new policy, most notably with regard to the potential cost implications involved. In that context, she indicated that she was concerned at the indication in the email about the burden of the additional costs on drivers.
- Councillor Mark Howell, referring to the earlier comments about additional costs, noted that, unfortunately, this was the nature of being self employed. It might be necessary to consider whether there were too many taxis in South Cambridgeshire.
- Councillor Graham Cone noted that the Licensing Committee had spent a considerable time debating the safety of both drivers and passengers. He commented that residents he had spoken to were supportive of the proposal to have CCTV in taxis to protect them and the drivers. Those Members sitting on Licensing Committee had seen cases where having CCTV would have been hugely beneficial. He felt that it was not unreasonable to expect drivers to have CCTV in their vehicles by 2020, given they had two years to prepare for this one off cost.
- With reference to paragraph 2.29 on page 43, Councillor Tumi Hawkins observed that CCTV footage would be kept for not less than 28 days but wanted clarification on what would happen to it thereafter, as 28 days seemed a relatively short period of time.
- Councillor Hazel Smith noted that paragraph 2.29 stated that the footage may only

- be accessed by the Police or an authorised officer of the Council and not a proprietor or driver, and queried how the CCTV could be tested.
- Responding to the points made thus far in the debate, Councillor Riley, Chairman of the Licensing Committee:-
    - Confirmed that the appropriate changes had been incorporated in the draft policy to take account of the comments from Councillor Bridget Smith concerning executive vehicles.
    - With regard to the comments in paragraph 2.29, noted that professional companies would install the CCTV and it was to be assumed that they would be able to conduct testing. He anticipated that there would be a rolling period with regard to the retention of the data and did not believe that the 28 day retention period would present a problem.
    - Advised that he would arrange for a response to be provided to the hackney carriage driver but noted the following in response to the points raised:
      - There were 58 hackney carriage drivers and 1261 private hire drivers licensed in the District.
      - It was assumed that the driver must have been aware that the only place for hackney carriage drivers to wait was Cambridge North Station.
      - The colour of existing hackney carriages would not have to change. This provision would only apply to brand new vehicles.
      - There did not appear to have been a response from the driver to the consultation.
      - The suggestion that responses from City Council drivers had slanted the consultation was refuted on the basis that 19 respondents were licensed with this Council; 3 were not licensed with the Council and 1 respondent was anonymous.
  - The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing provided further clarification on the requirements for the colour of hackney carriage vehicles, noting that any new vehicle would be required to be white with a crest from 1 April 2018. No change would be required to the colour of existing vehicles until they were naturally replaced, which typically was a period of 4 – 6 years.
  - Councillor Anna Bradnam noted that the purpose of CCTV was to protect passengers and drivers, and asked whether, should a complaint be received within 28 days, there was a procedure to ensure that the footage was not deleted. In response, Councillor Riley indicated that it was implicit in the policy that this scenario was covered.

On being put to the vote, votes were cast as follows:

**In favour (44):**

Councillors David Bard, Henry Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

**Against (0):**

**Abstain (0):**

After the vote, following a question from Councillor Lockwood, Council agreed to request Councillor Riley to arrange for a response to be sent to the hackney carriage driver.

(Note: Councillor Kevin Cuffley, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the above item, withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting thereon.)

The Council

**RESOLVED:**

That the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions, as recommended by the Licensing Committee, be approved and adopted with effect from 1 April 2018.

**7 (b) Corporate Plan 2018 - 2019**

Councillor Nick Wright, the Business and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader, proposed the recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 February 2018, which invited Council to approve the refreshed Corporate Plan, comprising the document "South Cambridgeshire: Your Place, Our Plan 2018-19" (Appendix A) and the Delivery Plan (Appendix B). Councillor Wright advised that the Corporate Plan was a key element of the Council's policy framework which articulated the Council's priorities and actions for the next year and would guide and influence the Council's resources, plans and services. He reminded the Council that the plan had been informed by the outcomes of the "Let's Talk" community engagement programme. Additionally a Member Task and Finish Group had recently completed a review on how the District Council could assist in the encouragement, development and support of rural businesses across the District. Many of the themes raised during the community engagement exercise were broadly similar to those included in the current Corporate Plan and appeared to validate the Council's current aims and policies. It was therefore proposed to retain the existing priority themes, namely, Living Well; Homes for our Future; Connected Communities and Innovative and Dynamic Organisation. Councillor Wright highlighted key activities achieved over the past two years, together with plans for the next year, in respect of each of those priority themes.

Councillor Tony Orgee seconded the recommendation.

During discussion:-

- Councillor Bridget Smith was pleased to note that three changes she had suggested at the Cabinet meeting had been incorporated; commented on the improved presentation and more accessible format, but indicated that she would not be voting in support of the plan.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley expressed the view that the apparent limited achievements within the last year perhaps explained why the plan set out achievements over the past two years, but only looked ahead for one year; noted that the snapshot on page 122 stated that 4,600 planning applications had been received in 2017 but did not indicate how many had been approved or refused; was of the view that the Council did not make it easy for businesses to start up; referred to the significant impact of development on rural communities in the District which he suggested did not appear to align with the aspiration in the Vision for "Quality of life in a beautiful and green environment"; and was concerned that the plan did not refer to the position with either the lack of 5 year housing land supply or the Local Plan.
- Councillor Sue Ellington commented on the simplified format of the Corporate

Plan and felt that it clearly presented the range and scope of the Council's work. However inclusion of a reference to the achievements in the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio since May 2017, notwithstanding extremely limited resources, would be welcomed.

- Councillor Tumi Hawkins commented on the simple presentation on pages 122 and 123. However, supporting Councillor Kindersley's earlier comments, she referred to the implications of the lack of 5 year housing supply and expressed concerns at the significant scale of the additional development in Caldecote (representing a 40% increase above the existing number of houses), notwithstanding the lack of associated infrastructure; sought clarification on how the Council was supporting the work of Connecting Cambridgeshire to improve broadband coverage and speeds and on what the Council's role would be in developing a local economic development strategy, as she understood that other partners were doing this work.
- Councillor Philippa Hart challenged the aspiration in the Vision for South Cambridgeshire to be "the best place to live, work and study", referring the significant levels of traffic congestion which she felt would only be exacerbated by further housing development; commented on her understanding that students from lower income backgrounds were put off from applying to study at Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form Colleges because of the high cost of travel; and referred to recent reports suggesting that train commuters had less space than the legal minimum for transporting livestock.
- Councillor Nigel Cathcart welcomed some aspects of the Corporate Plan but commented on the apparent lack of a specific reference to conservation. He was concerned that the uniqueness and individuality of South Cambridgeshire's rural communities should be maintained and protected and spoke in favour of the development and implementation of conservation area appraisals. Councillor Cathcart also repeated earlier concerns expressed about the lack of a 5 year housing supply.
- Councillor Peter Topping spoke in support of adoption of the Corporate Plan. In so doing, he paid tribute to the Councillors of all political groups who had worked hard to make South Cambridgeshire a better place to live, highlighting the contribution made by the Planning and Licensing Committees and the Health and Wellbeing and Rural Businesses Member Task and Finish Groups.
- Councillor Des O'Brien expressed the view that some villages had been adversely affected by previous decisions and that others would be affected in the future. He highlighted the impact of development proposals for Bourn, Caldecote, Caxton and Knapwell and emphasised the need to address infrastructure issues.
- Councillor Robert Turner, the Planning Portfolio Holder, noted that some villages had welcomed the development of affordable housing for local residents, but acknowledged some villages, including Cottenham and Swavesey, were affected by development. He commented on the current position with the Local Plan and indicated that officers were doing all in their power to keep it on track and that the plan would be adopted as soon as it was possible to do so. The issue with speculative applications would not have arisen if it had been possible to adopt the Local Plan three years earlier.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts was concerned that the Corporate Plan did not acknowledge the problems caused by the lack of a 5 year housing supply and Local Plan and did not reflect the significant impact of speculative planning applications on villages in the District. She also challenged the Council's influence on economic development in the District, believing that the growth was down to local businesses themselves.
- Councillor Tony Orgee, the seconder of the motion, noted that the Corporate Plan referred to achievements of the Council in each of the last two years. He

observed that some achievements, including the development of the first neighbourhood plan, were too recent to have been included in the Corporate Plan. Additionally he commented on the position with the Local Plan. He was disappointed that some of the negative views expressed had not been raised at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee when there appeared to have been general support for the plan, particularly for the new format. The diagrammatic presentation of key facts and figures on pages 122 and 123 had been particularly welcomed.

Councillor Wright responded to Members' questions and in particular:-

- Provided further background on the work of the Council in supporting the initiative to improve access to superfast broadband, noting in particular, the significant work of local councillors in feeding back information to Connecting Cambridgeshire.
- Clarified that the economic development strategy would need to be reviewed when the new Local Plan was adopted.
- Acknowledged the importance of conservation to the District, which he believed was implicit in the Corporate Plan and advised that conservation area appraisals were already being undertaken.

Upon being put to the vote, votes were cast as follows:

**For (29):**

Councillors David Bard, Ruth Betson, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Ray Manning, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

**Against (8):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Philippa Hart, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Edd Stonham and Aidan Van de Weyer.

**Abstain (7):**

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Tumi Hawkins, Janet Lockwood, Des O'Brien, Hazel Smith and Ingrid Tregoing.

The Council

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve the Corporate Plan, comprising the document 'South Cambridgeshire: Your Place, Our Plan 2018 – 2019' (Appendix A) and accompanying 2018 – 2019 Delivery Plan (Appendix B), incorporating feedback from Scrutiny and Overview Committee.
- (2) To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with Portfolio Holders, to prepare detailed implementation plans and associated performance measures and ensure these are reflected in directorate service plans and quarterly Position Reports during 2018 – 19.

- (3) To authorise the Chief Executive to make any minor wording changes required before publication, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**7 (c) Medium Term Financial Strategy (General Fund Budget 2018/19 including Council Tax setting), Housing Revenue Account (including Housing rents), Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy**

Councillor Simon Edwards, Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder, presented the recommendations of the Cabinet which invited the Council to approve the financial strategies and budgets, as detailed in the submitted report and appendices.

In introducing the report, Councillor Edwards highlighted the following points:-

- The budget had been prepared against the backdrop of external factors, including the autumn budget statement and the Local Government Finance settlement. Under the 4 year funding settlement, certain funding elements were fixed, for example, the reduction of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to zero.
- The baseline level of business rates receivable would remain unchanged.
- The New Homes Bonus Scheme would reduce from 5 years to 4 years as expected and the threshold over which the bonus was paid would remain at 0.4% for 2018/19.
- Less income was forecast from New Homes Bonus payments based on reduced housing completions. Additionally there was less planning income owing to a reduction in applications.
- There were three sources of funding to the Council, namely, Council Tax; Business Rates and income from interest and commercial activity.
- It was proposed to increase the Council Tax for a band D property by £5, which was equivalent to 3.7%. Whilst it was regrettable to increase the Council Tax, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on page 190 indicated the difference between the underlying Council Tax and the actual Council Tax, which would need to be met from savings or increased income.
- Income from Ermine Street Housing (ESH) was £1.4m in current year, projected to rise to £1.7m in the following year.
- Savings of £449k would be required in 2018/19 rising to £1.3m in 2022/23, with a total of £4.4m of savings needed over the next 5 years.
- It was proposed to use balances to smooth the impact of the reductions and to run those down over the life of the strategy to £2.5m.
- The MTFS indicated a marked increase in net Portfolio Holder expenditure from the current year of £17.5m to £19.2m in 2018/19, which was due to a number of factors including inflation; salary increments and a number of growth bids from service areas (as shown on page 200 of the report), together with reduced income from planning and the New Homes Bonus. It would no longer be possible to contribute 40% of New Homes Bonus receipts to the Greater Cambridge Partnership Investment and Delivery Fund whilst maintaining the expected funding levels for growth.
- An extra £200k had been provided in respect of homelessness prevention over the next two years to meet new statutory requirements.
- £55k had been allocated for the green energy fund and £200k for the green energy loan scheme. In that context, Council's attention was drawn to an error on page 201 of the report which indicated a provision of £100k for the green energy loan scheme. However, Cabinet had approved provision of £200k. Council was accordingly requested to note this amendment.
- A cautious approach had been taken to forecasting business rates income, in

view of uncertainties around the operation of business rates retention scheme over the next few years and the fair funding review.

- The Capital Programme included provision of £1.85m investment for Cambridge Leisure and Ice Centre (CLIC) in 18/19; £15m per annum for loans to ESH; £5m in 2020/2021 as a contribution to the A14 project and £160k in 2018/19 for street sweepers.
- The net Housing Revenue Account (HRA) savings proposed from 2018/19 over delivered against the profile of £250,000 per annum for 4 years, reducing the balance to be sought in the remaining two years to £147,540.
- There were growth pressures facing the HRA; rental income was decreasing and costs increasing and taking into account debt refinancing, debt interest and capital financing, there would be a small deficit on the HRA over the next three years and the strategy was to use HRA balances to smooth that out until 2021 when local authorities would be able to revert to the previously agreed rent increases of CPI plus 1%.
- The Treasury Management Strategy was set out at page 279 for Council's approval and Council was particularly reminded of the previous agreement to increase the maximum investment limit from the Council's cash reserves with ESH to £45m, while retaining the maximum investment at 60% of the Council's total investment portfolio. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators were detailed on page 289.
- A revised version of the statutory Council Tax resolution had been circulated which reflected an amended precept which had been advised to the Council by South Trumpington Parish.

The Portfolio Holder placed on record his thanks to officers for their hard work in preparing the Budget and HRA.

Prior to moving the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder pointed out that recommendation (h) was actually a decision of the Cabinet and did not require to be put to the vote.

The Portfolio Holder accordingly proposed the recommendations (except for recommendation (h)), together with the statutory Council Tax Resolution that had been circulated in the revised supplement.

Councillor Lynda Harford, the Housing Portfolio Holder, seconded the proposal and, in so doing, she drew attention to the following points:

- The main source of income to the HRA was rents and the Council was still subject to imposed rent reductions of 1% for a further two years. However it was anticipated that there would be a return to the previous position of rent increases at CPI plus 1% from April 2020.
- The HRA continued to support debt. However, the current policy did not assume set aside of resource to allow for repayment of debt but instead assumed the resource would be used to deliver a new build programme in the medium term in an attempt to ensure sustainability of the HRA.
- Details of the residual changes in national housing policy were awaited and would require further review of the position for the HRA.
- There was still no secondary legislation in place in respect of Mandatory Disposal of High Value Housing Stock, therefore, as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy, the decision had been taken to defer the assumption of any payment until at least April 2019.
- It was important to take account of external factors that could impact on the

collection of rent, such as welfare reform. Thus far Universal Credit had had a minimal impact but it was anticipated that the full roll out of Universal Credit at the Cambridge job centre in October would present challenges for the HRA.

- The benefit cap had affected 37 families in South Cambridgeshire, approximately 12 of whom were HRA tenants. The Council had contacted those affected to advise of the Discretionary Housing Payments which continued to be available to families most in need and at risk of homelessness.
- The number of customers affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy continued to reduce slowly.
- It was anticipated that right to buy sales would continue to remain low, particularly in light of the increase in the Bank of England base rate. A small spike had been witnessed in response to the threat of the Government's "Pay to Stay" proposals.
- Right to buy receipts had to be spent within 3 years of the receipt date, to fund the delivery of new social housing, with a maximum of 30% of any dwelling being funded via this mechanism and the balance from the Council's own resources or borrowing. The rise in bank base rates had also had an impact on the Council, with interest on any right to buy receipts not re-invested appropriately being charged at a rate of 4.5%. It was important to use right to buy receipts judiciously and instead of allocating them to repayment of debt, the Council was using them to build new homes. The Portfolio Holder was proud of the work officers were undertaking to provide a pipeline of schemes to use right to buy receipts within the time constraints imposed by the Government.

During discussion:-

- Councillor Anna Bradnam, referring to the Planning Portfolio capital schemes on page 193, asked whether the Council still had a commitment to Landbeach Tithe Barn; sought confirmation that, as indicated on page 194, it was proposed to borrow £15m a year from 2019/2020 for the next four years for onward loan to ESH; and asked for more information about the Envirocrime Enforcement vehicle.
- Councillor Ingrid Tregoing, with reference to page 248, asked whether charges for Communal Premises would be determined on an individual basis as implied in the report, as it had been her understanding that it was proposed to introduce an hourly rate charge.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins asked for an explanation of the budget line on page 186 called "Items not currently included in recharges" which indicated a provision of £249k. Additionally she requested clarification on the provision of £39k for the Greater Cambridge Partnership in 2018/19, noting that no such provision had been made in the current year.
- Councillor Nigel Cathcart commented on the extent of borrowing proposed in the budget and asked about the implications in terms of interest payments.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley thanked the Finance and Housing officers for their work on the Budget and HRA. With reference to page 231, he drew attention to the redevelopment of Robinson Court, Gamlingay, which would bring positive benefits to the community and thanked the Housing officers involved in the scheme. However he indicated that he would be unable to vote in support of the budget.
- Councillor Bridget Smith welcomed the additional provision being made in respect of homelessness prevention. She added her thanks to the Housing officers for the work on Robinson Court, Gamlingay. Councillor Smith made a plea for consistency in the terminology used in the budget and HRA, noting that the Greater Cambridge Partnership was referred to both correctly and by its

- previous name of the “City Deal”.
- Councillor Nick Wright observed that no alternative Budget or Corporate Plan had been submitted.
- Councillor Tony Orgee reported that a thorough debate had taken place on the Budget and HRA at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and that all Members of the Committee had supported referral to the Cabinet and Council, with no one abstaining or voting against. Scrutiny and Overview had particularly welcomed the provision of £200,000 in respect of the Council’s new duties for homelessness prevention.
- Councillor Van de Weyer observed that Overview and Scrutiny was approached in an apolitical way.
- Councillor Tony Orgee also stressed that the business of Scrutiny and Overview Committee was conducted in a non political manner.

In response to the questions and comments raised during debate:

- Councillor Lynda Harford, the Housing Portfolio Holder, confirmed that the charges for communal rooms were variable since all sites were different and noted that the use of communal rooms was currently being looked at.
- Councillor Simon Edwards, the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder:
  - Advised that there was no commitment to Landbeach Tithe Barn and therefore no provision in the Capital Programme.
  - Confirmed that it was proposed that the Council lend £15m per annum for 4 years to ESH.
  - Indicated that the figure of £249k shown as “Items not currently included in recharges” was a balancing figure sweeping up recharges that had not been allocated elsewhere.
  - Commented that the sum of £39k in respect of the Greater Cambridge Partnership was understood to relate to staffing costs, but further clarification would be sought on this.
  - Thanked Councillor Orgee and all Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee for the constructive and non political approach taken to the scrutiny of the Budget and HRA proposals.
  - Drew attention to the estimate for interest on balances as set out on page 188. Information on borrowing could be found in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in the exempt report to his last Portfolio Holder meeting. At present, funds were sourced from the Public Works Loan Board. However going forward there would be a need to review the Council’s external borrowing arrangements and accordingly it had been agreed to obtain external advice on the Council’s treasury management function.

The Chairman reminded the Council that recommendation (h) was a decision of Cabinet and would not therefore be put to the vote.

As required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and Council Standing Order 16.6, a recorded vote was taken (by means of the Council’s electronic voting system). Voting on recommendations (a) – (bb) (but excluding (h)), votes were cast as follows:

**For (31):**

Councillors David Bard, Ruth Betson, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Ray Manning, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

**Against (2):**

Councillors Deborah Roberts and Edd Stonham

**Abstain (11):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Ingrid Tregging and Aidan Van de Weyer.

The Council

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (a) Approve the revenue estimates for 2018-19 as shown in the General Fund (GF) Budget Setting Reports (BSR), Section 5 at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (b) Approve the precautionary items for the General Fund, GF BSR Appendix B, Appendix 1.
- (c) Approve the GF revenue forecasts as set out in GF BSR Section 6, Appendix 1.
- (d) Instruct the Executive Management Team to identify additional income/savings of £449k for 2018-19 rising to £1.3m in 2022-23.
- (e) Approve the GF Capital Programme and associated funding up to the year ended 31 March 2022, as set out in GF BSR Appendix D, at Appendix 1.
- (f) Approve the creation of a Planning Policy earmarked reserve and the transfer of £224k into the reserve from the GF reserve, being the carry forward of underspend from 2016-17 not used in 2017-18, as shown in GF BSR Section 3 and delegate approval of the use of this reserve to the Executive Director – Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing.
- (g) Request that the Portfolio Holder (Housing) delegate the decision in respect of any variation in fees to be charged by the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), to the Director of Housing, following agreement of the proposed level of charges by the Shared HIA Board, GF BSR Appendix A.
- (h) Set the Council Tax Requirement for 2018-19 at £8,616,458.
- (i) Set the amount of Council Tax for each of the relevant categories of dwelling in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 on the basis of the District Council Tax for general expenses on a Band D property of £140.31 plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish

Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, details of those precepts and their effect are as set out in the statutory resolution below.

- (j) Approve the HRA savings, increased income, unavoidable revenue pressures, bids and reduced income items, as summarised in Section 4, and detailed in Appendix G(1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (k) Approve the non-cash limit adjustments, as summarised in Section 4, and detailed in Appendix G (1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (l) Approve the resulting HRA revenue budget as shown in the HRA Summary Forecast 2017-18 to 2022-23 in Appendix I of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (m) Approve the retention of the balance of the 4 year savings target included originally as part of the 2016-17 HRA Budget Setting Report to mitigate the impact of some of the changes in national housing policy, recognising that the net savings proposed from 2018-19 over-deliver against the profile of £250,000 per annum for 4 years, reducing the balance to be sought in the remaining 2 years to £147,540.
- (n) Approve that Council dwelling rents for all social rented properties be reduced by 1%, in line with legislative requirements introduced as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Act, with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018.
- (o) Approve that affordable rents are reviewed in line with rent legislation, to ensure that rents charged are no more than 80% of market rent, with this figure then reduced by 1% as with social housing. Local policy is to cap affordable rents at the lower level of Local Housing Allowance, which will result in rent variations in line with any changes notified to the authority in this level, effective from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018.
- (p) Approve inflationary increases of 2.6% in garage rents for 2018-19, in line with the base rate of inflation for the year assumed in the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- (q) Approve the proposed service charges for HRA services and facilities provided to both tenants and leaseholders, as shown in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report, at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (r) Approve the latest budget, spend profile and funding mix for each of the schemes in the new build programme, as detailed in Section 5 and Appendix E of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report, recognising the most up to date information available as each scheme progresses through the design, planning, build contract and completion process.
- (s) Approve earmarking of the required level of additional funding for new build investment between 2018-19 and 2022-23 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 either take the form of HRA new build, with the 70% top up met by other HRA resources or could alternatively be grant made to a registered provider, where the registered provider will provide the 70% top up to build new homes.

- (t) Approve the capital budget proposals, both bids and savings, detailed in Appendix G(2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report.
- (u) Approve the capital amendments, detailed in Appendix H of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which include the capital proposals in Appendix G(2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report, at Appendix 2 to the report, alongside re-profiling of investment, increase and re-allocation of resource for new build schemes.
- (v) Approve the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix J of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to the report
- (w) Approve the Capital Strategy 2018-19 to 2022-23, Appendix 3.
- (x) Approve the borrowing and investment strategies for the year to March 2019, as included in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement in Appendix 4.
- (y) Approve the prudential indicators required by the Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities for the year to 31 March 2019, included in Appendix 4.
- (z) Approve any unspent New Homes Bonus money allocated to the Greater Cambridge Partnership to be rolled into 2019-20.
- (aa) Give delegated authority to the Executive Director – Corporate Services to issue the final version of the Estimates Book, incorporating any amendments required from the Council’s decisions.

As required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and Council Standing Order 16.6, a recorded vote was taken (by means of the Council’s electronic voting system) on the statutory Council Tax resolution and votes were cast as follows:-

**For (36):**

Councillors David Bard, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Ray Manning, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O’Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

**Against (0):**

**Abstain (6):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Nigel Cathcart, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Bridget Smith, and Aidan Van de Weyer.

The Council

**RESOLVED** to approve the following statutory resolution in respect of the Council Tax for 2018-19:-

That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2018-19 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- (a) £90,664,825 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act (gross expenditure including parish precepts, the Housing Revenue Account and additions to reserves)
- (b) £75,516,060 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act (gross income including the Housing Revenue Account and use of reserves)
- (c) £14,013,850 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (net expenditure to be met from council tax) being the district amount of £8,616,458 and the parish precepts of £5,397,392
- (d) £228.20 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax for a band D property for the District including parishes)
- (e) £5,397,392 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (parish precepts)
- (f) £140.31 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (average council tax for a Band D property for the District excluding parishes), the amounts being for each of the categories of dwellings shown below in **Table 1**
- (g) In accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, the basic amounts of Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a special item relates are shown by addition the amounts for Band D for the District Council in **Table 1** and **Appendix A** to the supplement submitted to Council.
- (h) In accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands are shown by adding the amounts for each band in **Table 1** and **Appendix A** of the supplement submitted to Council.

That it be noted that for the year 2018-19 Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in **Table 1**:

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Band A</b> £	<b>Band B</b> £	<b>Band C</b> £	<b>Band D</b> £	<b>Band E</b> £	<b>Band F</b> £	<b>Band G</b> £	<b>Band H</b> £
County Council	833.22	972.09	1,110.96	1,249.83	1,527.57	1,805.31	2,083.05	2,499.66
Police & Crime Commissioner	132.48	154.56	176.64	198.72	242.88	287.04	331.20	397.44
District Council	93.54	109.13	124.72	140.31	171.49	202.67	233.85	280.62
Fire Authority	45.84	53.48	61.12	68.76	84.04	99.32	114.60	137.52
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

- (i) That the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts set out in **Appendix B** of the supplement submitted to Council as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2018-19 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in **Appendix B** of that supplement.

#### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX**

*Including the precepts from the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Fire Authority and all of the parishes, the formal Council Resolution would produce a Council Tax for a Band D property of:*

		£	Change from previous year
District Council	General Expenses	140.31	+3.70%
	Special Expenses for Parish Precepts (average)	87.89	+5.11%
County Council		1,249.83	+4.99%
Police & Crime Commissioner		198.72	+6.40%
Fire Authority		68.76	+2.96%
Combined Authority		0.00	0.00%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1745.51</b>	<b>+4.97%</b>

On these figures the council tax would range from £1,105.08 for Band A to £3,595.62 for Band H before any discounts or benefits.

**Appendix C** of the supplement submitted to Council shows the General Fund summary including Parish precepts and the final Formula Grant figure.

**7 (d) Swavesey Byeways Rate**

Councillor Robert Turner proposed, and Councillor Sue Ellington seconded the recommendation from the Swavesey Byeways Committee, following its meeting held on 5 February 2018.

The Council unanimously by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

To maintain the current level of the Swavesey Byeways rate of £1.10 per hectare for land within the charge paying area for the period 2018/19 in order to fund the required level of maintenance.

(Note: Councillor Brian Burling, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the above item, withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting thereon.)

**8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY**

The Council noted reports prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority summarising the work of the Authority during January 2018.

The Council's representatives on the Combined Authority were invited to comment on the reports, as summarised below:-

- Councillor Peter Topping, the Leader of the Council and the Council's representative on the Combined Authority Board:-
  - Commented on the position with the Independent Economic Commission being led by Dame Kate Barker, noting that South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and the Greater Cambridge Partnership had submitted well argued responses to the call for evidence.
  - Reported on the expectation that the Combined Authority would be announcing a further 250 homes as part of the acceleration of the affordable housing programme.
  - Advised of the work being undertaken by the Combined Authority to accelerate delivery of houses, both affordable and for market, at Northstowe.
  - Commented that the Combined Authority had agreed to development of an outline business case and options appraisal report for the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM) proposal.
- Councillor Andrew Fraser noted that the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Council.
- Councillor Alex Riley, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-
  - Referred to concerns about the allocation of resources across the Combined Authority area and his understanding that an aim of the Independent Economic Commission review was to help ensure that growth proposals were fair across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
  - Commented that a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been called on 12 February 2018 to review the budget report due to be considered by the Board on 14 February 2018. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed their concern at the lack of detail in the budget papers and that they did not reflect the money committed to projects in future years, such as the commitment made to Peterborough University.

- Noted that the Committee had agreed to set up a task and finish group to look at the CAM metro proposal.

During questions addressed to the Council's representatives on the Combined Authority:-

- Councillor Anna Bradnam sought more information about the Independent Economic Commission, noting that it did not appear to be referred to in the Combined Authority's report before Council. In response, Councillor Topping acknowledged that whilst this issue might not be referred to in the papers, he had thought it important to keep Members up to date on progress with the Independent Economic Commission and could provide further information to Councillor Bradnam and other Members if this would be helpful.
- The Leader reported that the Combined Authority Board had discussed the need for future budgets to have a "forward look".
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley asked whether it was wise to place so much faith in the outcomes of the Independent Economic Commission, referring to the outcomes of a previous review led by the Chair of the Commission on housing supply which, amongst other things, had concluded that in the region of a further 200,000 extra homes would need to be built each year in England. In response, Councillor Riley commented on the powers of the Mayor and emphasised the importance of the work being undertaken by the Independent Economic Commission, referring to his understanding that members of the Commission were committed to the review.
- Councillor Bridget Smith commented that she found the level of reporting on the Combined Authority meetings, by way of decision sheet, to be unsatisfactory and asked whether a more comprehensive means of reporting back could be developed so that Councillors were not reliant on the Council's representative to keep them informed. Councillor Riley commented on his perception that there appeared to be limited discussion and information available at Board meetings, but he noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was seeking to find ways of achieving more effective challenge. Councillor Topping commented on his understanding that some authorities arranged briefings for Members at full Council meetings and suggested that the Council could arrange briefings on particular subjects to be held before Council meetings so that they were not constrained by standing orders.
- Councillor Des O'Brian referred to the minutes of the Council held on 17 November 2016 concerning the devolution debate, which recorded concerns expressed by Councillor Riley on the proposed scrutiny arrangements of the Combined Authority and indicated that he had questioned the purpose of including independent members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He asked whether Councillor Riley was satisfied that Overview and Scrutiny was working effectively and that its views were listened to. Councillor Riley acknowledged that he had challenged the proposal to appoint independent persons on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when discussed in November 2016 since, given that they would not have voting rights, their role had been unclear. Independent members had not been appointed and he still saw no reason why they should be. He commented on how Overview and Scrutiny was working, noting that whilst the committee could call in individual portfolio holder decisions, it had no power over mayoral initiatives. He also commented on the impact of the LEP being brought within the auspices of the Combined Authority for membership and voting at the Combined Authority.
- Councillor Anna Bradnam queried whether the minutes of Combined Authority meetings were available. It was noted that the decision summary contained a

link to the relevant webpage where more information about each meeting, including the minutes once published, could be found.

## **9. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS WITH NOTICE**

### **9 (a) Question from Councillor Bridget Smith**

*How much, in total has, the Boundary Review of Over and Willingham cost this Council including the cost of any Freedom of Information Requests?*

The Leader of the Council responded that:-

- The Council had received a valid petition to carry out a Community Governance Review of the Over and Willingham boundary and, as such, had been required to carry out the review.
- The estimated total cost of carrying out the review was £6,067:
  - Legal fees (Counsel advice) - £2,900
  - Officer time – approximately £2,692 (approximately 71 hours, staff of different grades from within Health and Environmental Services, Legal and Electoral Services)
  - FOI – £475 (approximately 19 hours, original FOI (15 hours) plus request for paper copies (4 hours))

Responding to a supplementary question as to whether the boundary review could have been handled in a different manner in order to avoid the additional costs incurred, the Leader referred to the letter received from solicitors, on behalf of the petitioners, and reminded Members that the Council's legal officers had advised that it was necessary for the Civic Affairs Committee to review its recommendation. The costs incurred by having to review that recommendation had, in the view of the Leader, been unavoidable. The intervention of solicitors had inevitably escalated the costs associated with the review.

### **9 (b) Question from Councillor Henry Batchelor**

Councillor Batchelor explained the background to his question, which related to a case concerning a resident in his ward who had received a valuation for her 75% share of a property, which was some £27,625 less than it was marketed for three months later. He therefore asked the question below.

*Can the Portfolio Holder tell us how many shared equity homes SCDC has purchased back, which have then been marketed at a higher value than the shared owner was paid?*

The Housing Portfolio Holder reported that 14 sales had been completed and a further 6 were in progress. She explained that the Council always obtained independent valuations but previous experience had shown that, where the Council had purchased leasehold properties, it had invariably taken a long time to sell them, sometimes well in excess of a year. Every such property which remained vacant during that time, was one less property available for residents to benefit from. The policy had accordingly been reviewed and now the Council carried out any necessary refurbishment works prior to selling properties. This had resulted in a significant improvement in turnaround rate,

often enabling the Council to buy the property and get it onto the market within 1 month. The period taken to sell the property had reduced and therefore demonstrated the benefit of the Council refurbishing properties to make them more attractive to potential purchasers. Receipts could be realised more quickly and were used to match fund right to buy receipts which, in turn, added to the housing supply.

Councillor Henry Batchelor asked, as a supplementary question, in how many of those cases had owners obtained a second valuation, rather than relying on the valuation from South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The Housing Portfolio Holder indicated that she would provide a written response to Councillor Batchelor.

**9 (c) Question from Councillor Ingrid Tregoing**

*I can see that South Cambs Planning Committee have objected to the plans for an Energy from Waste facility on Levitts field in Landbeach parish, as did I. I understand that space for landfill at this site may run out in the next 10 – 15 years. Has the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services been involved in the current energy from waste debate and is he developing a plan in partnership with the County Council to address the impending loss of landfill in good time?*

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder responded that, as Members were aware, Amey Cespa had put in a planning application. He had attended, as a member of the RECAP Board, a presentation by Amey Cespa to members of that Board on 17 January 2018, but this was the extent of his involvement.

All RECAP members were working with Cambridgeshire County Council, the disposal authority for Cambridgeshire, looking at the strategic direction of waste management locally. Cambridgeshire Country County was in a 28 year Private Finance Initiative contract with Amey Cespa that had started in 2008.

To reduce waste going to landfill all of South Cambridgeshire 'black bag' household waste was taken to a Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) facility, where material was recovered for recycling and other uses before the remainder was made into a compost-like-output.

Councillor Tregoing, noted that tackling climate change was the responsibility of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder and, as her supplementary question, asked whether Councillor Wotherspoon, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, had been involved in the South Cambridgeshire energy from waste debate.

The Chairman of the Council ruled that under Standing Order 11.8 the supplementary question needed to be directed to the person answering the original question.

In response to Councillor Tregoing's supplementary question, the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder indicated that he was not aware whether the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder had been involved in the energy from waste debate.

**9 (d) Question from Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer**

*Has this Council considered making representations to the consultation on the proposed closure of the Cambridge Magistrates' Court?*

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder indicated that the Council had not

responded to the consultation. Cambridge Magistrates' Court was only used for 31% of available time, at a cost of £580k in 2016-17 and the proposal was to move non-custodial cases to Cambridge County Court and custodial cases to Huntingdon or Peterborough Magistrates' Court.

Councillor Van de Weyer, as a supplementary question, noted that on 10 February 2018 three South Cambridgeshire District Councillors had been canvassing with Lucy Frazer, the MP for South East Cambridgeshire, who was the Justice Minister responsible for this proposal, and asked whether any of the Councillors had discussed this with her, noting how important the Cambridge Magistrates' Court was for the residents of South Cambridgeshire.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder reported that he was unaware whether the Councillors in question had discussed the issue with the MP. However he noted that Lucy Frazer MP had stated that "While consideration of the demands on the courts and tribunals estate in the context of reform is important, we also need to assess the existing estate to make sure it is efficient and offers value for money to taxpayers now."

#### **9 (e) Question from Councillor Tumi Hawkins**

*The written answer to my question at the January 2018 full Council meeting which unfortunately I did not get to ask in part due to the filibustering of certain members of the Cabinet, contained the sentences: "They (Inspectors) were well aware of the number of homes on sites that have been granted permission due to the lack of 5 year housing land supply. However, none of the modifications they have asked us to consult on involved changes to housing allocations."*

*Can the Leader please tell us the specific dates when the Council informed the inspectors of these numbers, and provide the evidence of the communication?*

The Planning Portfolio Holder responded that the Local Plan Inspectors had been made aware on a number of occasions during the examination of the difficulties and impact that a lack of 5-year housing land supply was having on South Cambridgeshire and its communities. The Council had asked a number of times for an early view from the Inspectors on the proposed joint housing trajectory with Cambridge which would have given control back to the Council, but the Inspectors had said they could not do so because of the inter-connections with the overall development strategy.

Some specific examples of how the Council had made the Inspectors aware of the impacts of 5-year housing land supply were:

1. The Council's written statement to examination Matter [SC1 Strategy for the Rural Area](#), published in May 2017 on the Council's website, had provided information at paragraphs 13 and 14 on the housing supply in the rural area, and the impact of 5 year supply planning application decisions. Maps showing omission sites with permission had also been included.
2. At several of the Matter SC1 hearings held 6-15 June 2017, which had dealt with omission sites that objectors were arguing should be allocated in the Local Plan, officers' oral evidence to the Inspectors at several hearings was that the Council considered the Local Plan sound as submitted, but they made the point robustly that even if the Inspectors took the view that further allocations were required in the rural area, 1990 dwellings had by then been granted permission or resolved to grant permission as a result of a lack of a 5-year housing land supply and no further allocations needed to be made.

3. The Council had also written to the Inspectors in January 2017 to update them on the resolution to grant planning permission for Cambourne West, at a scale larger than identified in the local plan, which had been published as reference document [RD/Gen/380](#) in the examination library.
4. Annual Monitoring Reports, which included the housing trajectories, had been made part of the Examination documents during the examination, published in the examination library. These had been referenced in a number of statements.
5. Most recently the latest housing trajectory had been provided to the Inspectors on 27 November 2017 alongside an updated land supply situation in working correspondence with the Inspectors on proposed modifications relating to 5 year land supply. These had been published on 20 December 2017 as reference documents [RD/GEN/550](#) and [RD/AD/500](#) in the examination library.

Following a request from Councillor Hawkins, the Planning Portfolio Holder agreed to provide the above response to all Members in writing.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Hawkins noted that over 5,000 approvals had been given as 5 year housing land supply sites and, given that the Bourn Airfield development proposal provided for 3,500 homes, asked whether the Planning Portfolio Holder considered that the development was now surplus to requirements.

The Planning Portfolio Holder responded that this was not his decision and would be down to the Inspector. The examination had now finished and the conclusions of the Inspector were awaited.

## **10. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS WITHOUT NOTICE**

As the 30 minutes allowed for Councillors' questions had not expired, the Chairman drew, at random, questions which had been submitted to the proper officer prior to the commencement of the agenda item, in accordance with Standing Order 11.4(b).

### **10 (a) Question from Councillor Grenville Chamberlain**

The Chairman drew a question from Councillor Grenville Chamberlain. However, Councillor Chamberlain indicated that he wished to withdraw the question.

### **10 (b) Question from Councillor Ruth Betson**

*I have heard about the Oxford to Cambridge train line. Members of wards to the west of Cambridge are wondering if they are going to be blessed or affected! Is the Leader able to tell us definitively where the track will pass in the final stretch before Cambridge so that we can prepare accordingly?*

The Leader of the Council referred to his understanding that no decision had yet been made on the final route at this end of the Oxford to Cambridge rail link. He understood that determination of the route depended on a number of factors, including whether it would pass north or south of Sandy and various considerations relating to topography, environmental impact and heritage. The Leader was of the view that the Government was committed to the scheme and that it would therefore proceed. However, thus far, no final decisions had been made on the proposed route.

Cllr Betson understood that the Council was not part of the East – West Rail Consortium

and, as a supplementary question, asked whether the Council should join the Consortium.

The Leader responded that there were a number of forums relating to the proposed Oxford – Cambridge rail link, but confirmed that the Council would be joining the East – West Rail Consortium.

## 11. NOTICES OF MOTION

### 11 (a) Motion from Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer moved the following motion, as set out on the agenda:-

“Following the removal of the Leader of this Council as the Combined Authority Portfolio Holder for Housing, this Council no longer has confidence in the ability and the political will of the Mayor and Combined Authority to ensure that South Cambs equitably benefits from the devolved affordable housing fund.”

In moving his motion, Councillor Van de Weyer referred to an infographic contained in the papers for the next Combined Authority Board meeting indicating that East Cambridgeshire had received £925,000 in 2017-18 for affordable housing, whilst South Cambridgeshire had received £829,000. With regard to the change in the Portfolio Holder for Housing, he believed that it was important to now focus on how the Council could ensure that the Combined Authority honoured its commitments to support delivery of affordable housing in South Cambridgeshire and for the area to receive the appropriate share of the funding which the Combined Authority had been given by Central Government. Councillor Van de Weyer questioned how, if the Leader was no longer the Portfolio Holder for Housing, the Council could continue to be involved in the projects for affordable housing and how the interests of South Cambridgeshire could best be protected.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Philippa Hart.

During discussion:

- Councillor Simon Edwards spoke against the motion as he did not consider there to be any detriment to South Cambridgeshire. He noted that portfolio holders had to conduct their role in an impartial manner and not take decisions that favoured their own “patch”. The Leader would now be free of any such constraints and would be able to lobby harder for South Cambridgeshire on the Combined Authority Board.
- Councillor Bridget Smith noted that, at the last Cabinet meeting, there had been discussion on the advantages to be derived from the Council being the lead authority for the Combined Authority’s affordable housing programme and from the Leader being the Portfolio Holder for Housing. She was concerned about the implications of the potential loss of the role as lead authority.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins noted that the budget report referred to the Council as lead partner for the delivery of the £100m affordable housing programme on behalf of the Combined Authority and indicated that South Cambridgeshire and its housing staff had led on the housing stream to date. She questioned how the Council could be the lead partner if the Leader was not the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
- Councillor Lynda Harford, the Housing Portfolio Holder, commented that officers had worked to secure the £170m funding for housing, using their expertise to put together the business case against Government criteria to obtain the funding for

the affordable housing programme. Each constituent council of the Combined Authority wishing to bid for funding for housing would need to demonstrate how their bid met the appropriate criteria and this process would apply regardless of who the portfolio holder was. The Council would continue to benefit from the expertise of its housing officers and would be well placed to ensure that a sound business case was presented for every application made by the Council which could be judged against the agreed criteria.

- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley reminded the Council of concerns expressed during the devolution debate in November 2016 about the concept of a directly elected Mayor. He expressed the view that the directly elected Mayor model was an “Americanisation” of the political system, which placed too much power and influence into the hands of one individual.
- Councillor Peter Topping, the Leader of the Council, indicated his view that it was important to work with the Mayor and Combined Authority and to continue to advocate on behalf of the interests of the residents of South Cambridgeshire. In his judgment there was advantage in working with the Combined Authority to develop projects that would benefit South Cambridgeshire. As to the distribution of the £100m affordable housing budget, Councillor Topping indicated that this was written into the devolution deal document agreed with the Government and, as a member of the Combined Authority, he would continue to fight to ensure that South Cambridgeshire received its appropriate share of that funding.
- Councillor Des O’Brien referred to the devolution debate and wondered if the Council could take any comfort from the minutes of the Council meeting on 17 November 2016 which referred to “...a commitment for Greater Cambridge to receive a £100 million housing infrastructure fund to help deliver infrastructure for housing and growth, which included at least 2,000 affordable homes.” The minute additionally noted that “...a capital fund of £70 million over five years would be ring-fenced for Cambridge to meet its housing needs.”
- Councillor Ray Manning commented that, having carefully reviewed the wording of the motion, he considered that it would do nothing to assist the Council in making the case for its appropriate share of the affordable housing funding and, indeed, could be detrimental. Moreover, it would be unhelpful to criticise the Combined Authority which included the Council’s own Leader.
- Councillor Nick Wright spoke against the motion, noting that the Mayor had only been in office for 9 months and that he had been elected by the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. He echoed Councillor Harford’s point about the Council being well placed to bid against the criteria for funding.
- Councillor Philippa Hart, the seconder of the motion, supported earlier comments about the expertise of the Council’s housing staff. However, she repeated that East Cambridgeshire had secured £925,000 in funding for affordable housing, yet South Cambridgeshire had secured funding of £829,000. Noting the comments around the processes in place to govern consideration of bids, Councillor Hart was concerned about whether that process would be adhered to. She was of the view that the Council would now need to work harder to present its case against the criteria. Acknowledging that the Council had no choice but to seek to work with the Combined Authority, as one of the constituent councils, Councillor Hart argued that it was important for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise decisions and hold the Mayor to account.
- Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer summed up and suggested that the Council needed reassurance that South Cambridgeshire would receive its fair share of the funding for affordable housing. Additionally he was sceptical about whether the process for approving bids provided comfort. He acknowledged that, as a constituent authority, the Council would remain part of the Combined Authority but felt it was important to record its concerns, as indicated in the motion.

Upon being put to the vote, votes were cast as follows:-

**For (13):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Ingrid Tregoing and Aidan Van de Weyer.

**Against (23):**

Councillors David Bard, Ruth Betson, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Simon Edwards, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Ray Manning, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Ben Shelton, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

**Abstain: (3)**

Councillors Sue Ellington, Mark Howell and Des O'Brien

The motion was therefore declared lost.

**12. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2018/19**

The Council received a report which invited approval of the draft Calendar of Meetings 2018/19, as set out in Appendix A.

Councillor David McCraith proposed that the draft Calendar of Meetings 2018/19 be approved.

Councillor Brian Burling seconded the motion.

Councillor Mark Howell proposed an amendment to the draft Calendar of Meetings by deletion of the Annual Meeting on Thursday, 24 May 2018 and its insertion on Wednesday, 23 May 2018.

Councillor McCraith, as the proposer of the original motion, indicated that he was prepared to accept the amendment for incorporation within his motion.

Council **RESOLVED** by affirmation:

To approve the Calendar of Meetings 2018/19, as set out Appendix A to the submitted report, subject to amending the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2018 to Wednesday, 23 May 2018.

**13. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

The Chairman noted that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Council during the current Municipal Year. He thanked all those Members who had decided not to seek re-election in May for their hard work and dedication during their time as District Councillors and wished them well for the future.

Councillors Doug Cattermole, Andrew Fraser, Janet Lockwood, Cicely Murfitt, Tony Orgee and Ingrid Tregoing, all of whom were retiring from the Council, were thanked for their hard work during their terms of office. Members marked the service of individual Councillors with speeches.

Councillors paid particular tribute to Councillor Cicely Murfitt who had served on the Council for 16 years. Councillors recognised the long and distinguished service of Councillor Murfitt with speeches and applause. Councillor Murfitt, in turn, thanked Councillors for their best wishes.

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**The Meeting ended at 5.17 p.m.**

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