

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 26 November 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Ellington – Chairman
Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Robin Page, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
	Gary Duthie	Senior Lawyer
	Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
	Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

Councillor David Bard, former Chairman of the Council from 2013 – 2015, presented cheques of £1,000 following the money raised during his term of office to each of his chosen charities:

- East Anglian Air Ambulance;
- Help for Heroes;
- Cambridge Fundraising Committee – Sick Children's Trust.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Burling, Simon Crocker, Simon Edwards, Peter Johnson, Peter Topping and David Whiteman-Downes.

It was noted that Councillor Edwards was currently in hospital. Members agreed to send him a card, together with their best wishes for a swift recovery.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

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

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting and two extraordinary meetings held on 24 September 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Sue Ellington, Chairman, reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had announced its decision as part of the South Cambridgeshire boundary review that the Council size for South Cambridgeshire District Council would be 45. This was the Council size recommended by the Council as part of its submission to the Boundary Commission as agreed on 24 September 2015.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, informed Members that a briefing note from the Local Government Association had been issued on the Government's autumn statement. He agreed to circulate this to all Members.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

It was noted that a petition had been received in relation to safer walking and cycling to and from North West Cambridge. Members were informed that the petition had been referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for consideration.

7. PETITIONS

No petitions for consideration by the Council had been received since the last meeting.

8. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

8 (a) **Business Case for Ermine Street Housing and Borrowing and Investment Strategy (Cabinet, 12 November 2015)**

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, presented a report which set out the performance of the housing company pilot and sought a decision on the future of the company. The appendices to the report contained exempt information in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended. Council agreed that Members would not discuss or divulge any of the exempt information contained within the appendices, therefore meaning that the press and public did not need to be excluded from the meeting.

Councillor Howell reminded Council that it had agreed to the establishment of a housing company pilot project on 28 November 2013 and agreed to advance up to £7 million of funding to secure a market rented portfolio of homes, and that the pilot scheme went live in May 2014. A number of objectives for the housing company had been set at the outset of setting up the pilot, which were set out in paragraph 7 of the report. Councillor Howell reported that the loan portfolio in respect of assets held at the time of writing the report was £6,837,970 and resulted in the company owning 34 homes, with two further acquisitions in progress, with all those intended for letting now occupied. In addition, the company had secured long-term management deals with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and had a further 42 properties under management for five years, with more in the pipeline.

Councillor Howell reported that the pilot had been successful, it had generated an additional income stream for the Council and also provided the opportunity for learning in a new area of business. During the course of the pilot the Council had received interest payments from the company, providing returns in excess of £100,000. It was also noted that the pilot spanned the first year of operation for the company and, as a result, included significant set up costs resulting in the company making a trading loss in year one. Councillor Howell emphasised that this was expected.

Referring to the options contained within the report, Councillor Howell proposed option C, which sought to expand the portfolio over a five year business period, investing approximately £100 million, with the aim of owning and managing 500 properties by the end of that period. He highlighted the proposed governance arrangements set out in paragraphs 29 to 31 of the report, which would see a Board established consisting of six voting members to include two elected Members, two executive officers (the Company Director and the Company Secretary) and two independent members selected for their skill sets. The lead manager for the company would also attend meetings of the Board as a non-voting member.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

The Chairman used her discretion to allow Councillor Howell to speak more than once in order that he could answer questions by Members on the business case. The following points were noted during this exchange:

- the £100 million would be borrowed by the Council for the lowest possible exchange rate, the source of which had yet to be identified, with the Council subsequently loaning the money to the housing company at a higher level of interest;
- the housing company sought to operate as an ethical landlord, and would take extra steps where it could to offer support to tenants when necessary. However, there had to be a clear distinction between the housing company and the Council;
- recent announcements regarding stamp duty could incur an additional 3% increase per home, but it was noted that companies which owned 15 or more houses would be exempt from this increase;
- in questioning the amount of the proposed £100 million investment it was noted that this was based on £20 million of investment per year over a five year period. This was the amount necessary to enable a positive impact on the Council's budget in view of the significant reduction in Government grant, which had reduced by £6 million since 2008. An investment of this amount would provide the Council with an additional income stream sufficient enough to enable the provision of high quality services and address the loss of Government grant funding;
- many other Councils across the country were interested in the way this company had been set up and how it was operating, with South Cambridgeshire District Council being seen as a model of good practice in this respect;
- risk registers would be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and in particular would be reviewed and amended where necessary to reflect the implications of the Government's autumn statement;
- the amount of assets owned by the housing company had to be greater than the amount it would owe the Council so that it was in a position where it could pay back the outstanding debt to the Council if it needed to, thereby negating any risk;
- the Corporate Governance Committee was satisfied that the necessary processes were in place from an audit perspective to protect the Council, having been assured by internal and external auditors. Councillor Howell welcomed this and also wanted to see the Partnerships Review Committee take a role in reviewing the company's operation, from the interests of both the Council and the company itself;
- the housing company would operate under the terms of the business plan as approved by the Council;

- the two officers who had supported the pilot to date were a key reason for its success and one of the biggest risks to the ongoing success of the company was the retention of their knowledge and skills;
- the business plan should have included more proposals to build new houses with the investment, encouraging use of local businesses and services. Councillor Howell explained that this was something he envisaged the company doing in the future and was very supportive of this approach.

Voting on the proposition, with 45 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 2 abstentions
Council **APPROVED**:

- (a) the expansion of the housing company portfolio over a six year period 2015/16 to 2020/21, as set out in option C of the Cabinet report.
- (b) the adoption of the five year business plan set out in Appendix B.
- (c) the establishment of three new fixed term posts to deliver the business plan.
- (d) the establishment of a Board to oversee the work of the company as set out in paragraphs 29 to 31 of the Cabinet report.
- (e) an amendment to the Council's Borrowing and Investment Strategy to include additional Council capital expenditure and borrowing of £100 million for on-lending to Ermine Street Housing with effect from December 2015.
- (f) an amendment to the Council's Borrowing and Investment Strategy for the minimum revenue position to include a fixed and floating charge over or an equity share of an asset of value as a full or partial proxy for the provision.

Enough Members as prescribed by the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Cicley Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aiden Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against

Councillors Neil Davies, Robin Page, Deborah Roberts and Edd Stonham.

Abstention

Councillors Nigel Cathcart and Douglas de Lacey.

8 (b) Review of Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee Terms of Reference to determine City Deal infrastructure schemes (Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting, 17 November 2015)

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a report which set out an amended Terms of Reference for the Fringes Joint Development Control Committee to include the determination of City Deal infrastructure schemes. He proposed that the revised Terms of Reference be approved.

Councillor David Bard seconded the proposal.

Councillor Francis Burkitt proposed an amendment to add the following words to the motion:

“and requested that the Joint Development Control Committee, as separate agenda items at one of its meetings within three months from the date of this meeting:

- (a) discusses whether it's name should be changed to a title that:
 - more closely reflects its new terms of reference;
 - is clearer to members of the public
- (b) discusses whether any Members of the Committee who are also Members of the City Deal Executive Board or Joint Assembly, should be able, or should not be able, to vote on “City Deal infrastructure schemes”;
- (c) notes that South Cambridgeshire District Council's current position is that it would not agree to any further "exclusions" of its participation similar to that set out in Clause 4.5 of the proposed amended Terms of Reference.”

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon seconded the amendment and the proposer and seconder of the original motion agreed to accept it.

Noting that Cambridgeshire County Council's Constitution and Ethics Committee had deferred consideration of this issue, a question was raised as to why this Council should not also seek to defer it. It was confirmed that the County Council's Committee had only received the report one day prior to the meeting, and that this issue was one of a number of issues related to the City Deal contained within the same report, so the deferral was due to process rather than content.

A number of Members made the point that the Joint Development Control Committee should be considering and determining strategic sites, and these amendments to the Terms of Reference tidied up that aspect of its remit.

Voting on the substantive motion, with 43 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 8 abstentions, Council **SUPPORTED** the proposed changes to the Fringes Joint Development Control Committee Terms of Reference, subject to the formal approval of Cambridgeshire County and Cambridge City Councils, and requested that the Joint Development Control Committee, as separate agenda items at one of its meetings within three months from the date of this meeting:

- (a) discusses whether it's name should be changed to a title that:
 - more closely reflects its new terms of reference;
 - is clearer to members of the public

- (b) discusses whether any Members of the Committee who are also Members of the City Deal Executive Board or Joint Assembly, should be able, or should not be able, to vote on "City Deal infrastructure schemes";
- (c) notes that South Cambridgeshire District Council's current position is that it would not agree to any further "exclusions" of its participation similar to that set out in Clause 4.5 of the proposed amended Terms of Reference.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Abstention

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Tumi Hawkins, Cicley Murfitt, Robin Page, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith and John Williams.

8 (c) Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee (Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting, 17 November 2015)

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a report which provided the Council with an opportunity to consider the future function of the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee. He said that the Committee had been successful for what it needed to do in relation to the new town of Northstowe, but it felt that it was now time for the body to be disestablished. He therefore proposed that the Committee be wound up and that Council requested further consideration of committee arrangements for the new settlements when there was more clarity about the timing of the relevant strategic decisions.

Councillor Lynda Harford seconded the proposal.

The following points were made in debating the proposition:

- the proposal for the Committee to be wound up was premature and should be given further consideration;
- the Council's Planning Committee was very strong and fair, with Members at the District Council being more aware of planning, particularly the technical implications of Section 106 Agreements and development control;
- the new town of Northstowe was moving from the development control process to the delivery process, so it was the right time for the Committee to be disbanded;
- some Members of the Joint Development Control Committee had been involved with this development from the outset and would like to see it through;
- Councillor Lynda Harford, Planning Committee Chairman, said that Northstowe was in a transitional period and there may be applications for the Planning Committee to determine should the Joint Development Control Committee be

disbanded. She indicated that she may be willing to use her discretion to allow Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee Members to speak on applications relevant to the town of Northstowe in order that their knowledge and experience was not lost.

Councillor Tim Wotherspoon in his capacity as Chairman of the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee took this opportunity to pay tribute to those Members of the County Council and District Council who had served on the Committee.

Voting on the proposition, with 34 votes in favour, 13 votes against and 3 abstentions, Council **AGREED** that the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee be wound up and requested further consideration of committee arrangements for the new settlements when there was more clarity about the timing of the relevant strategic decisions.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors David Bard, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Sebastian Kindersley, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Nigel Cathcart, Neil Davies, Jose Hales, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Caroline Hunt, Douglas de Lacey, Cicely Murfitt, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Hazel Smith and Edd Stonham.

Abstention

Councillors Val Barrett, Janet Lockwood and Des O'Brien.

(Note – Councillor Robin Page was not present during the vote for this item).

9. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

No questions on joint meetings were received.

10. GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL

Council noted a briefing note which provided updates for each of the Greater Cambridge City Deal workstreams.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley asked the Leader to make contact with the proprietors of Madingley Mulch in respect of the recent consultation for the City Deal A428 and A1303 corridor infrastructure scheme. Councillor Kindersley reported that that they felt as though they had been left out of the process.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council and the Council's representative on the City Deal Executive Board, agreed to refer this issue onto the relevant officers.

11. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

11 (a) From Councillor Grenville Chamberlain

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain asked the following question:

“Will the Leader please explain why the Community Chest Fund has exhausted its resources after just 6 months of grants being available this year?”

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, said that the grant was probably a victim of its own success with it being more well known across the district, even in view of the grant being increased earlier in the year. He added that it had been extremely successful, with over 80% of parishes having receiving funding through the grant since its introduction. The application system was very fast and simple which had helped people access the grant and he reiterated that it was always undertaken on a ‘first come, first served’ based.

11 (b) From Councillor Ben Shelton

Councillor Ben Shelton asked the following question:

“How is the Council preparing to help the Government deliver its target of 200,000 starter homes? A recent Shelter report has shown that no one earning a Living Wage will be able to afford a starter home in South Cambridgeshire, how will the Council also ensure that we can still support the housing needs of those on lower incomes?”

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, recognised that starter homes met the needs of some people in the district but not everyone, which was why the Council was seeking to build its own homes. He confirmed that the Council did not meet the criteria that the Government had set to apply for the starter home grant being offered.

Councillor Shelton, as a supplementary question, asked what more the Council could do to expedite development to address need and demand.

Councillor Robert Turner, Portfolio Holder for Planning, reported that the Council was doing a lot of work with developers. He said that the most significant thing the Council could do would be to have a Local Development Plan in place so that development occurred in locations where it was wanted, rather than through speculative applications.

11 (c) From Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer asked the following question:

“Could the Leader update the Council on the progress of discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council and the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership relating to the participation of the Council in the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme for Syrian refugees?”

Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, responded by saying no progress had been made.

Councillor Van de Weyer, as a supplementary question, said that many Councils had started taking refugees and had arrangements in place, so was surprised that this Council had not commenced discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council and the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership.

Councillor Howell reflected on his response to the petition on this issue that had been considered at the meeting of Council on 24 September 2015, where he said that supporting Syrian refugees would mean having to consider their needs alongside those vulnerable people already living in South Cambridgeshire. His priority was for those people living in the district and he said that until further details became available he was not in a position to be able to offer housing to people outside of South Cambridgeshire.

11 (d) From Councillor Bridget Smith

This question was deferred to the next meeting.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

12 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor Deborah Roberts

Councillor Deborah Roberts proposed the following motion:

“That this Council agrees with Conservative MP for Elmet and Rothwell, Mr Alec Shelbrooke, that rural communities are facing “death by a thousand cuts” from builders and planners allowing inappropriate developments on towns and villages across the country – this destroys communities, lays waste the green belt and ignores the environment. Much of the development is completely unsustainable (such as lack of water in South Cambridgeshire) and simply reproduces the same mistakes made during the building frenzy of the industrial revolution.

15 years ago the Chief Planning officer for South Cambridgeshire insisted that this district was “full”. This Council respectfully asks the Prime Minister to implement his promises concerning localism and allow local communities to democratically plot their own futures with the power to reject the centralised environmental atrocities being imposed on the countryside throughout England and Wales by the Government’s planning policies, and its Bristol based inspectors (the Planning Police).”

Councillor Roberts felt that the Council should make a significant statement about how the character of South Cambridgeshire had detrimentally changed over recent years and made the point that Councillors were elected to represent their villages and communities, saying that they had a voice which should be used. She made reference to inappropriate developments was of the opinion that they did not take into consideration the future and character of affected villages. She therefore urged Members to support the motion.

Councillor Tim Scott seconded the motion.

In debating the motion the following points were made by Members:

- it was essential for the Local Development Plan to be adopted as soon as possible;
- South Cambridgeshire had a very supportive Member of Parliament and Cabinet Members who had opportunities to discuss and potentially influence Government. The Council should make as much out of those opportunities as possible;

- growth was vital to the Greater Cambridge area and South Cambridgeshire as a district. The Local Plan would ensure that this growth occurred in those locations where it was wanted. The district was not full and there were methods available to insure that adequate infrastructure was put in place to accommodate more people living and working in South Cambridgeshire;
- South Cambridgeshire was a place where people wanted to live and work. It was consistently in the top ten for best places to live in the country and significant employers were keen to be located in the Greater Cambridge area;
- the Council should use this opportunity to send a message to Government.

Voting on the motion, with 12 votes in favour, 31 votes against and 6 abstentions, the motion was lost.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors Val Barrett, Nigel Cathcart, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Tumi Hawkins, Caroline Hunt, Cicley Murfitt, Des O'Brien, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Edd Stonham and Bunty Waters.

Against

Councillors David Bard, Henry Batchelor, Francis Burkitt, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Roger Hickford, Mark Howell, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Ben Shelton, Hazel Smith, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Abstention

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Neil Davies, James Hockney, Douglas de Lacey, Alex Riley and Bridget Smith.

(Note – Councillors Tom Bygott and Robin Page were not present for this vote).

12 (b) Standing in the name of Councillor Francis Burkitt

Councillor Francis Burkitt proposed the following motion:

“That this Council:

- notes the response that Cambridge BOLD has submitted to the City Deal consultation on the Cambourne-to-Cambridge public transport corridor, and that it reflects amendments from the earlier draft that take account of feedback from residents;
- notes that the City Deal Executive Board intends to consider the consultation responses in March 2016, and make a final decision in September 2016;
- given that the City Deal has now launched three public consultations (Cambourne-to-Cambridge, Chisholm Trail, & Call for Evidence) and has more in its pipeline, requests the Chief Executive to bring to Council, for debate, a

protocol as to how Members individually, and the Council as a body, should respond to such consultations, whether they be related to transport, planning or other matters.”

Councillor Burkitt, Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee and a Member of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Joint Assembly, referred to the Corporate Governance Committee’s consideration of the terms of reference for the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board and Joint Assembly prior to their establishment and understood that this Council was have a ‘super-consultee’ role as a significant strategic partner. Supporting this motion would enable the Council to further consider how it wanted to respond to City Deal consultations, highlighting that significant transport infrastructure scheme consultations were already commencing.

Councillor Tim Scott seconded the motion.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition and Member of both the Corporate Governance Committee and City Deal Joint Assembly, shared concerns regarding how this Council could contribute to these consultations and did not feel that it was currently engaging as a ‘super-consultee’. She therefore wanted to see this occur as quickly as possible in view of the fact that these consultations were already happening.

Members commended the format of the Cambridge BOLD document and the work that had been done by the community to produce it.

Council unanimously **AGREED** the following motion:

This Council:

- (a) Notes the response that CambridgeBOLD has submitted to the City Deal consultation on the Cambourne-to-Cambridge public transport corridor, and that it reflects amendments from the earlier draft that take account of feedback from residents.
- (b) Notes that the City Deal Executive Board intends to consider the consultation responses in March 2016, and make a final decision in September 2016.
- (c) Given that the City Deal has now launched three public consultations (Cambourne-to-Cambridge, Chisholm Trail, & Call for Evidence) and has more in its pipeline, requests the Chief Executive to bring to Council, for debate, a protocol as to how Members individually, and the Council as a body, should respond to such consultations, whether they be related to transport, planning or other matters.

12 (c) Standing in the name of Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer proposed the following motion:

“This Council believes that fiscal decisions should be made at the level of government that is closest to the people affected by those decisions. It therefore believes that decisions on Council funding, including Council Tax rates, should be made by the Council itself wherever possible.

This Council requests that the Government either removes the Council Tax cap entirely or lifts it to a figure of at least 5%.”

Councillor Van de Weyer referred to Heidi Allen MP's influence in the Government's recent announcement regarding Tax Credits as a way in which public lobbying could be effective. He was therefore of the opinion that the Council should take this opportunity to argue for the power to make its own decisions in respect of Council Tax and remove the cap, or lift it to a figure of at least 5%.

Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the motion.

The following points made by Members were noted in debating the motion:

- the Council should be trusted to set its own Council Tax rate, especially in view of the fact that South Cambridgeshire District Council was a low spending authority with one of the lowest rates of Council Tax in the country;
- this motion was probably too late considering the autumn statement had already been announced. It was therefore unlikely that anything would change in respect of Council Tax capping, other than in those instances referred to as part of the statement;
- this issue should be pursued as part of devolution discussions and considerations. It was noted that a workshop on devolution for Members was scheduled to be held shortly;
- it was worthwhile taking a chance to raise this issue with Government as there was nothing for the Council to lose.

Voting on the motion, with 16 votes in favour, 31 votes against and 1 abstention, the motion was lost.

Enough Members as prescribed in the Council's Standing Orders requested a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

In favour

Councillors Henry Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Neil Davies, Jose Hales, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Cicley Murfitt, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Against

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Roger Hickford, Mark Howell, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Robin Page, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Buntly Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Abstention

Councillor Des O'Brien

(Note – Councillors James Hockney and Caroline Hunt were not present for this vote.)

13. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2016/17

Council **AGREED** the following meeting schedule for the 2016/17 municipal year:

19 May 2016 (Annual General Meeting)
21 July 2016
22 September 2016
24 November 2016
26 January 2017
23 February 2017

14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council **NOTED** those engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since the previous meeting. The Chairman made reference to her Civic Reception held on 6 November 2015 and urged Members to attend the 2016 Reception.

The Meeting ended at 4.33 p.m.
