

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 26 September 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr. Douglas de Lacey – Chairman
Councillor Anna Bradnam – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Clare Delderfield, Sue Ellington, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Mark Howell, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Peter Topping, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams, Eileen Wilson and Nick Wright

Officers:	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Susan Gardner Craig	Interim Director of Corporate Services
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Philip Allen, Grenville Chamberlain, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Geoff Harvey, Alex Malyon, Tony Mason and Nick Sample.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that they needed to update their Register of Interests whenever their circumstances changed.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- a) Councillors Philip Allen and Dr. Martin Cahn were added to the list of apologies.
- b) In Minute 11, Councillor Peter Topping was replacing Councillor Cone as a substitute on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.
- c) In Minute 13(a), 13(b), 13(c), 13 (e) and 13 (g), the proposal from the Chairman to refer the motion to Cabinet be put in bold text.

Members expressed concern that their opposition to referring certain motions discussed under Minute 13 to Cabinet could be misconstrued as opposition to the actual motions. After a brief discussion Council by affirmation agreed to amend the minutes, as described in paragraph (c) above.

The Chairman expressed the hope that as these meetings were now being livestreamed, the minutes would be more concise in future.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Both the Chairman and the Leader were pleased to welcome Liz Watts, the Authority's new Chief Executive, to her first meeting of Council. The Chairman and Leader also thanked Mike Hill for all his work as Interim Chief Executive and, on behalf of the Council, the Chairman presented Mike with a letter of thanks for the work he had done.

The Chief Executive thanked councillors and colleagues for such a warm welcome in her first week and praised Mike Hill and all other staff for the extra work they had undertaken during the interregnum.

The Chairman invited Members to contact the Communications team with information about any events in their wards that could provide an opportunity to promote public engagement with the Local Plan.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the public had been received in time to be considered at this meeting.

7. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received in time for consideration at this Council meeting.

8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Leader had attended the meeting of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board on 31 July 2019. She explained that whilst the outline business case for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) had planned for an estimated £2 million to be sought from the private sector, it had now been decided that the estimated £3m cost would be entirely publicly funded. The Leader was pleased to report that the Board had endorsed the Vision for Nature.

With reference to the meeting held on 25 September 2019, the Leader reported that:

- She had expressed concerns regarding the errors and the lack of clarity in the Board's constitution, which had been approved, although she hoped that suitable corrections would be made.
- The Board would be reviewing the way in which it reported on performance monitoring.
- A bid to the £100m Affordable Housing Programme for a scheme to provide 5 houses at Whaddon Road, Meldreth had been approved in principle but referred back to the Housing Committee for further consideration.
- Plans for a rail station at Alconbury had been rejected as too expensive, which had led to concerns regarding how members of the public would be able to visit the County Council's offices. The Leader of the County Council had referred to the responsibility of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to deliver sustainable transport options between Cambridge and Alconbury. In response to questioning the Leader acknowledged that the GCP was set up to benefit the South Cambridgeshire and City administrative areas and not to fund projects outside it. However, on a point of information, Councillor Brian Milnes explained that the GCP had pledged to support the rail station as part of the development of

the Alconbury Enterprise Zone.

- The Board had discussed the European Union Exit Capability Programme and the papers had been circulated to the members of the Brexit Advisory Group in time for their meeting on Monday, at her request.

The Leader was pleased to announce that Homes England had opened a new office in Northstowe and the Council had been represented at the official opening ceremony.

Councillor Hazel Smith expressed concern that the answers to the questions raised by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2019 had not been provided. The Leader stated that she expected them to be included in the minutes of the Board.

Council **NOTED** the reports.

9. **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)**

Councillor Dr. Ian Sollom proposed and Councillor John Batchelor seconded the following motion:

1. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for their work in producing the report at Appendix A.
2. That the Council agrees the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for revisions to the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the report, subject to:
 - (i) The proposed Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leaders referred to on page 58 of the report being amended to read as follows:

Deputy Leader (Statutory)	£8,290
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The Special Responsibility Allowance for all other Cabinet members (except the Leader) to be set at £7,650.
 - (ii) Requesting the Independent Remuneration Panel:
 - (a) To undertake a further urgent review in respect of the Special Responsibility Allowances awarded to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in order better to reflect the time commitment and responsibilities associated with those roles (the SRAs recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel in Appendix A to be applied to those roles until such time as further recommendations are received from the Panel); and
 - (b) To review whether Special Responsibility Allowances should also be payable to this Council's representatives on the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee.
3. That, as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel:
 - (i) The Council approves the implementation of:
 - (a) The increase in the Basic Allowance retrospectively with effect from 1 April 2019; and
 - (b) The amendments to Special Responsibility Allowances and all other

- changes proposed in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel with effect from 26 September 2019.
- (ii) The Basic Allowance be increased annually in line with the annual staff pay award to the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
 - (iii) The Special Responsibility Allowances be increased annually in line with increases made to the Basic Allowance to the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
 - (iv) The number of Special Responsibility Allowances that any councillor may receive normally be limited to two and that paragraph 4(2) of the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended to read "No councillor may normally receive more than two Special Responsibility Allowances."
 - (v) That the section on "Public and Other Transport" in Schedule 1 to the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended as set out in paragraph 3 of the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.
4. That the Interim Director of Corporate Services be authorised to implement and advertise the new scheme and make any consequential amendments to the Scheme of Members' Allowances in Part 6 of the Constitution.
 5. That no further action be taken at this time with regard to review of the possible award of Special Responsibility Allowances in respect of any Executive Committees to be established by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and that further information be awaited about the proposed arrangements for such committees.

In response to a question, the Deputy Head of Legal provided procedural guidance as to the status of the above motion.

Councillor Ian Sollom commended the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel, who had responded to the request made by the Council last year to provide further evidence for any changes. The motion agreed the Panel's proposals, on the condition that the Deputy Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance only be paid to the Statutory Deputy Leader. The motion also requested that the Panel reconsider two issues:

- The Special Responsibility Allowances paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, to take into account the workload increase caused by change to a pre-scrutiny arrangement.
- Whether an allowance should be paid to members of the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee, as Planning Committee members were to receive an allowance.

Councillor Deborah Roberts expressed her opposition to the motion by stating that the increases could not be justified at a time when planning officers were leaving for better paid jobs in the private sector. She was concerned about the impact these increases would have on the reputation of the Council.

Councillor Peter Topping expressed his surprise at the motion, which appeared to run contrary to the views stated by members a year ago. He opposed the amendments to the Panel's recommendations, as "cherry picking" and asked that the independence of the Panel be respected.

Councillor Mark Howell stated that the Council had recently made staff redundant due to the need to control costs and so it would be wrong for councillors to award themselves the proposed increase in their allowances.

Councillor Brian Milnes expressed his support for the motion and the proposed 2%

increase in the basic allowance, in line with the cost of living increase to staff.

Councillor Heather Williams opposed the paying of up to two Special Responsibility Allowances to individual councillors. Councillor Sue Ellington agreed with Councillor Williams and explained that only one Special Responsibility Allowance had ever been paid in the past.

Councillor Nick Wright commented that since 2007 councillors' basic allowance had been increased in line with the cost of living increase awarded to staff. He reminded Council of the negative reaction to Cambridgeshire County Council's decision to increase their allowances.

Councillor Graham Cone believed that any increases should continue to be in line with the annual cost of living increase awarded to staff.

Councillor Gavin Clayton argued that the position of councillor should be open to all in society and a low allowance made it likely that only the wealthy would become councillors. He supported a means tested allowance, where only those on a low income received remuneration. He explained that many of those in the voluntary sector received no payments for the work that they do. He recognised how much work the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee carried out, but overall could not support the proposals.

Councillor John Batchelor explained that in 2018 the Council had reduced in size from 57 to 45 councillors. The Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations proposed modest increases, which did not appear to take account of the extra workload caused by the reduction in the number of councillors and would realise ongoing annual savings in the region of £60,000. The Independent Remuneration Panel had reviewed the hours worked by councillors who received a Special Responsibility Allowance in coming to their recommendations. He felt that it was difficult for councillors to make decisions upon their own remuneration and argued that this should be done at a national level.

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

In favour (22):

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Martin Cahn, Dr. Claire Daunton, Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Against (11)

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Abstain (4)

Councillors Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Philippa Hart and Dr. Tumi Hawkins.

Council

RESOLVED:

1. That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for their work in producing the report at Appendix A.
2. That the Council agrees the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for revisions to the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the report, subject to:
 - (i) The proposed Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Leaders referred to on page 58 of the report being amended to read as follows:

Deputy Leader (Statutory)	£8,290
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The Special Responsibility Allowance for all other Cabinet members (except the Leader) to be set at £7,650.
 - (ii) Requesting the Independent Remuneration Panel:
 - (a) To undertake a further urgent review in respect of the Special Responsibility Allowances awarded to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in order better to reflect the time commitment and responsibilities associated with those roles (the SRAs recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel in Appendix A to be applied to those roles until such time as further recommendations are received from the Panel); and
 - (b) To review whether Special Responsibility Allowances should also be payable to this Council's representatives on the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee.
3. That, as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel:
 - (i) The Council approves the implementation of:
 - (a) The increase in the Basic Allowance retrospectively with effect from 1 April 2019; and
 - (b) The amendments to Special Responsibility Allowances and all other changes proposed in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel with effect from 26 September 2019.
 - (ii) The Basic Allowance be increased annually in line with the annual staff pay award to the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
 - (iii) The Special Responsibility Allowances be increased annually in line with increases made to the Basic Allowance to the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
 - (iv) The number of Special Responsibility Allowances that any councillor may receive normally be limited to two and that paragraph 4(2) of the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended to read "No councillor may normally receive more than two Special Responsibility Allowances".
 - (v) That the section on "Public and Other Transport" in Schedule 1 to the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended as set out in paragraph 3 of the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.
4. That the Interim Director of Corporate Services be authorised to implement and advertise the new scheme and make any consequential amendments to the Scheme of Members' Allowances in Part 6 of the Constitution.
5. That no further action be taken at this time with regard to review of the possible

award of Special Responsibility Allowances in respect of any Executive Committees to be established by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and that further information be awaited about the proposed arrangements for such committees.

10. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council noted changes in membership made in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders in respect of places allocated to their Groups on Committees.

Council by affirmation:

RESOLVED to:

- (1) Note and endorse the following changes in Committee membership and substitute appointments:
 - (a) Scrutiny and Overview Committee:
 - (i) Councillor Gavin Clayton replaced by Councillor Nigel Cathcart as a member of the committee*; and
 - (b) Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee:
 - (i) Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson replaced by Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton as a substitute for this Committee.
 - (c) Audit and Corporate Governance Committee:
 - (i) Councillor Mark Howell replaced by Councillor Peter Topping as a member of the Committee.
 - (d) Planning Committee:
 - (i) Councillor Bill Handley replaced by Councillor Anna Bradnam as a member of the Committee; and
 - (ii) Councillor Anna Bradnam replaced by Dr. Claire Daunton as a substitute member of the Committee.
 - (e) Licensing Committee:
 - (i) Councillor Bill Handley replaced by Councillor Alex Malyon as a member of the Committee; and
 - (ii) Councillor Alex Malyon replaced by Councillor Bill Handley as a substitute member of the Committee.
- (2) Note that three Committees had been set up by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Leader had appointed the following members:
 - (a) Skills Committee – Councillor Eileen Wilson, with Councillor Neil Gough as substitute; and
 - (b) Transport and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, with Councillor Neil Gough as substitute; and
 - (c) Housing and Communities Committee – Councillor Bridget Smith, with Councillor Hazel Smith as substitute.

(*Note: Councillor Gavin Clayton has additionally replaced Councillor Nigel Cathcart as a substitute on Scrutiny and Overview Committee.)

11. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

11 (a) From Councillor Sue Ellington

The community of Northstowe continues to grow and develop. But the development of the ecumenical church and venues for 'all faiths' seems to have become rather

fragmented.

Services are currently held in the school, which is fine if it is a Sunday gathering but not good enough if it is a funeral or other gathering required midweek. Can the Lead Member for Planning explain how the S106 contributions of land allocations will be developed into buildings that can meet the specific needs of different faiths?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, explained that there was no specific requirement in the Section 106 agreement to secure a venue for different faiths. She recognised that the land currently allocated was only 0.25 hectares, which was too small to accommodate all faiths. She assured Council that officers were working with different faith groups, were developing a faith strategy and looking at the provision of community spaces in different phases. She pledged to keep councillors informed of any developments.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Ellington quoted from a letter from the Northstowe Minister, Reverend Dr. Beth Cope, detailing the need for different venues for people of different faiths. Councillor Ellington offered to circulate the letter to councillors and asked Councillor Dr. Hawkins if people of Councillor Shrobona Bhattacharya's faith would be welcome to worship in Northstowe.

Councillor Dr. Hawkins reported that the Council would work with all groups to identify a way forward and invited Councillor Bhattacharya to participate in these discussions.

11 (b) From Councillor Heather Williams

To ask the Lead Member for Planning what specific arrangements are in place regarding the supervision and collection of planning application validation fees, and is she confident that the correct amount is being recovered?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, explained that she had assumed that the question related to application fees not validation fees. She further explained that 80% of applications were made online, which required a checklist to be completed. All other applications were checked by the Technical Support Team. A technical workshop had recently taken place to focus on the wider validation process. She was happy to investigate any reports of the wrong charges being paid.

Councillor Heather Williams was concerned that Terraquest contracted staff were validating the fees and asked, as a supplementary question, whether they would be supervised by Council staff to ensure that correct charges were applied. Councillor Hawkins explained that Terraquest employees were supervised and invited Councillor Williams to discuss any specific concerns regarding this issue outside the meeting.

11 (c) From Councillor Mark Howell

Is the Lead Member of Planning satisfied with the letter that has been sent by the Council to long serving members of the planning department putting them on temporary contracts, and the letter that has been sent to all planning officers regarding the new mileage arrangements for the Greater Cambridge Planning Service?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins stated that she was satisfied that the correct process was being followed.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Mark Howell stated that a long standing member of staff had received one of these letters and felt that the wording was

insensitive and that staff felt unappreciated.

Councillor Dr. Hawkins emphasised that staff were appreciated. She recognised that a new planning system was being introduced but indicated that the matters raised were of an operational nature and she invited Councillor Howell to discuss this specific situation outside the meeting.

11 (d) From Councillor Bunty Waters

Under the new arrangements for the Greater Cambridge Planning Service, can the Lead Member for Planning tell me how many dedicated planning appeals officers the Council will have going forward?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet for Planning, explained that the Council had only one dedicated appeals officer in the building and this had led to capacity issues. She indicated that by joining together the two services the Council would have two appeals officers in the future thereby increasing resilience.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Waters asked if the Council had the resources to contest planning appeals. Councillor Dr. Hawkins explained that the Council had not had a dedicated planning officer for some time. The current arrangement worked well and the Council had the resources in place to win appeals.

11 (e) From Councillor Nick Wright

Given the concerns about alleged breaches of planning conditions at Northstowe by contractors and given the reductions in the numbers of the planning enforcement team employed by the Council, is the Lead Member for Planning confident that planning conditions will continue to be robustly enforced by this Council?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, queried the words "reductions in numbers" in the question. She explained that the enforcement team currently had six officers with one vacancy. She further referred to a meeting which had been held with developers, and a range of Council officers with regard to enforcement in Northstowe on 28 August. Councillor Dr. Hawkins explained that the Council continued to give priority to progressing enforcement issues at Northstowe.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Wright asked if one hire car provided enough capacity for the Council's planning officers.

Councillor Dr. Hawkins explained that there had been no reduction in mileage rates and the arrangements being introduced were the same as those agreed for the Shared Waste Service, which had been approved by the unions. Further guidance would be issued to officers within the week. Councillor Dr. Hawkins concluded that operational issues were the responsibility of officers and the invitation to Councillor Wright to attend monthly meetings remained open.

11 (f) From Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya

To ask the Lead Member for Planning services what contact will councillors and the residents of South Cambridgeshire have with the external supplier of planning services engaged by the Council, and how will we and our residents be able to contact this company?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, explained that

councillors and residents should continue to contact the relevant case officer with their concerns.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Dr. Bhattacharya, asked how much contracting out the service was costing the Council. Councillor Dr. Hawkins replied that she did not have the figure, but would provide this to Councillor Dr. Bhattacharya outside the meeting.

11 (g) From Councillor Peter Topping

To ask the Leader of the Council is she confident that the Greater Cambridge Partnership will deliver on its target of 1,000 additional affordable homes?

Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer explained that 772 affordable homes on eligible sites were anticipated to be delivered between 2021 and 2031 towards the target of 1,000 by 2031. This meant that it was expected that the Council would be able to deliver 77% of the target on the basis of currently known sites. It was anticipated that this figure would rise as a result of developments consistent with the housing strategy objectives and the normal passage of planning applications on “rural exception sites.”

As a supplementary question Councillor Peter Topping explained that the Leader had written to the Greater Cambridge Partnership in 2016 to express concern that the targets would not be achieved. He asked if this concern had dissipated. Councillor Dr. Van de Weyer replied that the Council was working with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to deliver on its targets for affordable housing, but acknowledged that nothing could be guaranteed.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

12 (a) Motion from Councillor Heather Williams

Councillor Heather Williams moved and Councillor Nigel Cathcart seconded the following motion, as set out in the agenda:-

“South Cambs is a growth area, with 70,000 homes to be delivered in major new communities and existing villages. We know that many of these new homes will attract young families and the number of young people in the District will rise. It is therefore hugely important that the voice of young people is heard in the development of the Council’s policies for the future of the District. This Council encourages youth engagement in local politics and supports the greater involvement of young people in decision-making at the Council and requests Cabinet to establish a cross-party Members’ Task & Finish Group to consider options for delivering this.”

Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer stated that the figure of 70,000 homes was incorrect and possibly referred to residents. He proposed the motion be amended to include the correct figure of 19,500 homes. Councillor Bridget Smith seconded this amendment, which Councillor Heather Williams, as the mover of the motion, accepted without debate.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed the hope that this motion would enjoy cross-party support, as it was not intended to be critical of the current administration and its only aim was to promote youth engagement.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart advocated the importance of youth engagement in the political process for the benefit of the wider society. He considered the motion to be viable and

reasonable and urged councillors to support it.

Councillor Bridget Smith, as a former champion of young people and vulnerable adults for the Council, expressed her support for youth participation and the engagement of hard to reach groups. She listed the work that had been carried out in the past, including the setting up a Youth Council, and provided details of work currently being undertaken within the Council and by existing councillors. However, she regarded youth engagement as “business as usual” and did not consider that a cross-party task and finish group was necessary to continue the promotion of this work.

Councillor Sue Ellington spoke in favour of the motion and stated that she had helped set up the Youth Council.

Councillor Brian Milnes stated that youth engagement could not be imposed from the top, but needed a catalyst, such as Greta Thunberg, to get young people interested in politics.

Councillor Graham Cone asserted that a Task and Finish Group would be a positive way to consider how the Council could better promote youth engagement.

Councillor Gavin Clayton recognised the challenge in trying to engage with young people and suggested that technology could be used. He lamented the fact that Cambourne did not have a youth club.

Councillor Peter Topping supported the motion and did not believe that the current activities referred to by the Leader adequately responded to the aspirations for youth engagement in the motion.

Councillor Deborah Roberts recommended that different ideas should be tried and evaluated and felt that a Task and Finish Group could help to facilitate this.

Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya explained that many councillors worked with children, but engaging them directly in politics was more challenging. She suggested that A-Level students be encouraged to attend Council meetings.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins commented that young people had engaged with planning issues and these issues could be promoted without setting up a Task and Finish Group.

Councillor John Williams spoke of the need to engage with young people on issues that were important to them, such as the environment and promoting renewable energy. Councillor Pippa Heylings reminded Council that children from the Histon and Impington Eco Group had addressed a recent Climate and Environment Advisory Committee meeting and local children aged 8-10 years old had also spoken at a Parish Council.

Councillor Anna Bradnam stated that setting up an extra Task and Finish Group was unnecessary to promote youth engagement.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that the setting up of a Task and Finish Group would allow the Council to build on the work already being carried out.

Upon the motion being put, a vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (14):

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Gavin Clayton, Graham Cone, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Deborah

Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Against (24)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Dr. Claire Daunton, Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Abstain (0)

The Chairman declared the motion to be **LOST**.

12 (b) Motion from Councillor Graham Cone

Councillor Graham Cone moved and Councillor Heather Williams seconded, the following motion, as set out in the agenda:-

“That this Council requests Cabinet to publish a table on its website each month including the following:

- The number of planning applications received during the previous month.
- The total number of live applications remaining at the end of the previous month
- The average validation time that month
- The average determination time that month
- The average time for a decision notice that month
- The date of submission of the oldest live planning application held by the Council.

These figures should set out a breakdown of minor, major applications, pre-applications, decision notices, discharge of conditions, reserved matters.”

Councillor Graham Cone explained that, if passed, this motion would benefit residents and parish councils, by ensuring that expectations were more realistic regarding the service that the Council could provide.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that this information would help to manage residents’ expectations and alleviate pressure on officers.

Councillor Steve Hunt was concerned that providing a small amount of information could be misleading and supported the current Key Performance Indicators, presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, as more meaningful measures of performance.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins stated that the Key Performance Indicators were included in a quarterly report and available online on the Gov.UK website. She considered it unnecessary to burden officers by asking them to provide more information.

Councillor Sue Ellington said that this data would show how long it took the Council to validate new planning applications and it could help drive improvements.

Councillor Peter Topping stated that the information would help the local Members to keep their parish councils informed and questioned why it appeared that some Members did not wish to publish the information.

Councillor Brian Milnes reported that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee already interpreted the Key Performance Information relevant to the Planning Department and

Councillor Peter McDonald expressed surprise that such questions about the KPIs did not appear to have been raised at the Committee.

Councillor Nick Wright expressed his support for this motion. He explained that the current Key Performance Indicators did not provide the same data as requested in the motion.

Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer stated that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee was the best place to discuss the performance of the Planning department and that the necessary performance data was already submitted. He queried whether detailing the average validation time would be informative, as many planning applications had to be re-submitted.

Councillor Ruth Betson asked why, if the performance information was already published on the Gov.UK website, it could not simply be replicated on the Council's website.

Councillor Graham Cone stated that the motion would make the Council more transparent.

Upon the motion being put, votes were cast as follows:

In favour (11):

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Against (25)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Gavin Clayton, Dr. Claire Daunton, Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Abstain (0)

The Chairman declared the motion to be **LOST**.

12 (c) Motion from Councillor Nick Wright

Councillor Nick Wright moved and Councillor Deborah Roberts seconded the following motion, as set out in the agenda:-

“With an external company now being involved in duties normally performed by officers of the Council's planning department, the Council requests Cabinet to ensure true transparency by making it clear to applicants, agents, residents, parish councils and local members when a Terraquest employee/contractor is involved in an application and the extent of their involvement in the application.”

Councillor Nick Wright explained that this motion was about transparency by making it clear to residents who was processing planning applications. He stated that when he was Planning Portfolio Holder the number of outstanding planning applications had been reduced to 385, whilst the current figure was 1,363. He expressed concern regarding the outsourcing of services to external contractors.

Councillor Deborah Roberts supported this motion and was concerned about the

standard of the planning service. She expressed her dissatisfaction that Members had not been consulted on the appointment of external contractors and explained that this motion would provide greater transparency on who was processing applications.

Councillor Anna Bradnam explained that the engagement of a contractor had been discussed at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and it was a reasonable solution to the challenges being faced.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed the view that the Council should be as transparent as possible and this motion, if passed, would allow parish councils and applicants to know who was processing their applications.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins explained that the name and extensions of contracted staff would be available and so they could be contacted. Additionally all applications had a named case officer who could be contacted and any final decision would be made by Council officers.

Councillor Brian Milnes questioned the value of the information being requested.

Councillor Nick Wright spoke in support of the motion, stating that it would simply allow applicants to know who was dealing with their applications.

Upon the motion being put, votes were cast as follows:

In favour (10):

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Against (25)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Abstain (1)

Gavin Clayton.

The Chairman declared the motion to be **LOST**.

12 (d) Motion from Councillor Peter Topping

Councillor Peter Topping moved and Councillor Nick Wright seconded the following motion, as set out in the agenda:-

“This Council notes with some concern the five year land supply and housing trajectory calculations as they apply to South Cambridgeshire District Council that have been approved by one member of the administration, outside of any council meeting, or meeting to which councillors could have been invited to be briefed.

In particular, the Council notes that the five year land supply is now calculated to be 5.3, down from six, according to the Council’s own report published on 6 November.

The Council considers the proposed consultation on this issue – which is to send

comments by email to the Director of Planning for the Council - to be insufficient in terms of challenge and discussion by elected members, given how important this issue is to all of our villages and towns and their residents, who are rightly concerned with the impact of speculative development.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Lead Members for Housing and Planning to offer to, and attend with, members of this Council, a meeting and full briefing on the issue, to be arranged during the month of October. The purpose of the meeting would be to provide transparency on how the calculations have been arrived at, and to enable discussion, testing and challenge of matters such as the confidence rating attached to specific parts of the overall assessment.”

Councillor Peter Topping expressed concern that the Council’s five year land supply was calculated to be 5.3, down from 6. He stated that decisions had been approved by a single member of Council and not in a meeting, where questions could have been asked and risks assessed.

Councillor Nick Wright commented that after 18 months, the five year land supply was falling rapidly and the Council should be given an opportunity to work together to address this.

Upon the motion being put, votes were cast as follows:

In favour (10):

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Against (23)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Dr. Claire Daunton, Clare Delderfield, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Abstain (3)

Gavin Clayton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey and Peter Fane,

The Chairman declared the motion to be **LOST**.

12 (e) Motion from Councillor Geoff Harvey

In the absence of Councillor Geoff Harvey, Councillor Peter Fane moved the following motion, as set out in the agenda:-

“Onshore wind is the cheapest new source of energy in the UK today - and the UK is the windiest country in Europe. New government policy is now needed to realise these benefits. Onshore wind can play a key role in an ambitious industrial strategy delivering clean, cheap and smart energy. Furthermore, onshore wind energy is vital to our aim of achieving 2050 net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Government statistics show that 79% of people now support onshore wind - fifteen times the proportion opposed. This Council resolves to make representations to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request that the National Planning Policy Framework is amended so that applications for small-scale onshore wind developments in England of no more than five megawatts are treated in the same way as any other

application for renewable and low carbon energy.”

Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn seconded the motion.

In moving the motion, Councillor Fane reminded the Council that it had agreed to be a zero carbon authority by 2050 and to achieve this, more renewable energy sources were required in the District. Public support for wind farms remained above 75%, but unfortunately the National Planning Policy Framework made it difficult for even small scale onshore wind turbines to be given planning permission.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the zero carbon target, but was not convinced that the solution lay in onshore wind farms.

Councillor Steve Hunt spoke in support of the motion, by stating that public support for fracking was at only 12%, whilst renewable energy generated by wind turbines had more support and would help reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the Council had to provide infrastructure for new homes and faced challenges due to development in the Cambridge to Oxford corridor. Providing renewable energy through wind turbines should be an essential part of this development. It was noted that a relatively small scale wind farm in Gamlingay generated energy for 100 homes and provided £7,000 a year to be put towards green infrastructure.

Councillor Nick Wright stated that he supported the construction of wind turbines provided that they were located in the right area. He received regular complaints from residents regarding the noise generated by a wind farm over the border in Huntingdonshire.

Councillor Deborah Roberts doubted that wind farms could produce the energy required and suggested that instead the solution lay in improving the efficiency of existing technology such as using coal and nuclear power to produce electricity. She concluded that wind farms should not be constructed against the wishes of local people and their parish councils.

Councillor Peter Topping supported the Council's target of zero carbon emissions by 2050, however he did not believe that onshore wind farms would make a significant difference.

Councillor Gavin Clayton stated that the visual impact of wind turbines was subjective and inevitably wind turbines would be opposed by some residents, who were likely to oppose any new local development.

Councillor Judith Rippeth supported this motion for the sake of future generations.

Councillor Bill Handley agreed with Councillor Wright that wind farms could be controversial, but noted that the motion referred only to small-scale developments.

Councillor Pippa Heylings expressed her disappointment that some members had expressed reservations about the provision of renewable energy. She agreed that wind turbines needed to be constructed in the correct place and it was the job of the Planning Committee to ensure this. Public opinion supported onshore wind turbines.

Councillor Brian Milnes spoke in favour of onshore wind turbines, as part of the solution to achieving the zero carbon emissions target.

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that the percentage of power generated by coal and nuclear was in decline and both onshore and offshore wind turbines were part of the solution. He considered offshore wind farms to be more economically viable. He asserted that the visual impact of electricity pylons was more of a concern than wind turbines and that power generated by onshore wind power, with the cables underground, could reduce the number of electricity pylons.

Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn asserted that the Government's National Planning Policy Framework was effectively a ban on onshore wind turbines and this was unsatisfactory. Offshore wind farms were not as economically viable as onshore turbines and could do nothing to assist the Council in achieving its zero carbon emissions target.

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

In favour (26):

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Gavin Clayton, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Clare Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Against (8)

Councillors Ruth Betson, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

Abstain (0)

The Chairman declared that the motion had been to be carried.

RESOLVED:

Onshore wind is the cheapest new source of energy in the UK today - and the UK is the windiest country in Europe. New government policy is now needed to realise these benefits. Onshore wind can play a key role in an ambitious industrial strategy delivering clean, cheap and smart energy. Furthermore, onshore wind energy is vital to our aim of achieving 2050 net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Government statistics show that 79% of people now support onshore wind - fifteen times the proportion opposed. This Council resolves to make representations to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request that the National Planning Policy Framework is amended so that applications for small-scale onshore wind developments in England of no more than five megawatts are treated in the same way as any other application for renewable and low carbon energy.

13. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman explained that the Vice-Chairman had attended two engagements in addition to those printed in the agenda as follows:

- Thursday 8 August – the funeral of former Councillor Alan Wyatt in Landbeach.
- Friday 6 September – the Chairman of Fenland District Council's Reception at the Eastrea Centre, Whittlesey, Peterborough.

The Meeting ended at 5.10 p.m.
