South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 23 September 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair
Councillor Peter Fane – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Sue Ellington, Corinne Garvie, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams, Dr. Richard Williams and Nick Wright

Councillors Cllr Gavin Clayton, Cllr Mark Howell and Cllr Eileen Wilson were in attendance remotely.

Officers:	Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
	Rebecca Dobson	Democratic Services Manager
	Jon Hall	Commercial and Licensing Services Manager
	Rachel Jackson	Principal Licensing Officer
	Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

Presentation

Gavin Chappell Bates, Centre 33's Fundraising Manager, gave a presentation on the work of the Chair's chosen charity, which provides emotional and mental health support to young people up to the age of 25.

1. Apologies

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Dr Martin Cahn, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Clare Delderfield, Jose Hales, Sally Ann Hart, Steve Hunt, Alex Malyon, Tony Mason, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Nick Sample and Fiona Whelan.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Heather Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

Councillor Henry Batchelor declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 14a as a member of the Investment Partnerships Board.

3. Register of Interests

Members were reminded to inform Democratic Services of any changes in their Register of Members' Financial and Other Interests form.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- The second sentence of the penultimate paragraph on page 5 be amended to read "The Leader, Lead Member of the Environment Group, replied …"
- The minutes were amended to always include the first name of Councillors Heather Williams, John Williams and Richard Williams.
- In minute 14c, the word "million" was amended to "billion" regarding the cost of the uplift in Universal Credit.
- Councillor Bill Handley's name was removed from the list of Councillors who had given their apologies as he had been present.

5. Announcements

The Chair proposed that Agenda Item 10, Making of Foxton Neighbourhood Plan, be discussed after Agenda Item 5 to allow the two public speakers to participate early in the meeting. Councillor Deborah Roberts seconded the proposal, which was agreed by affirmation.

There were no other announcements.

6. Questions From the Public

Mrs Linda Miller, Clerk to Swavesey Parish Council, asked the following question: "To the Lead Cabinet member for Planning: When will SCDC Planning Committee be held in an open formal with all attendees attending in person, Councillors, Officers and members of the public? In particular with Officers attending in-person? Swavesey Parish Council is concerned that although the use of virtual attendance has been necessary and has enabled meetings to continue, technology does not always work and feels that it reduces the ability to interact fully in a meeting."

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, stated that all the meetings of the Council had been held in person and open to the public since 7 May this year, in accordance with legal requirements. The public had the option of attending in public or in person. The Government's advice was to be cautious and the Council Chamber was not a naturally ventilated room. For this reason the Council encouraged officers to attend meetings remotely. The Council had received positive feedback regarding its hybrid meetings, which allowed parish councillors and other public speakers to attend meetings remotely.

Linda Miller asked whether members of the Planning Committee were attending site visits prior to their meetings. Councillor Dr Hawkins explained that due to the current Government guidelines planning site visits were not taking place, but she would ensure that parish councils were updated when this changed.

Margaret Starkie asked that, given the Council's commitment to a zero carbon strategy, will the authority take responsibility for the North East Area Action Plan project. Currently Anglia Water were responsible for this, but they had stated that the developer would become responsible for the area's carbon footprint.

Councillor Dr Hawkins stated that Anglian Water were responsible for the carbon footprint of the site and this would be monitored. The owners of the north east Cambridge site were responsible for the decommissioning process. The new development will be subject to the Council's net zero carbon policies.

Margaret Starkie stated that the two major developments would be monitored. She added that the site was commercial, not brownfield land.

6 (a) From Mr Daniel Fulton

It was noted that Mr Daniel Fulton had withdrawn his question.

7. Petitions

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

8. To Consider the Following Recommendation:

8 (a) Cabinet, 6 September 2021: 2020/21 Provisional General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn

Councillor John Williams presented this report on the General Fund for the financial year 2020/21. He explained that the capital programme had been revised due to the pandemic. The Council had faced challenges due to lower tax and lower commercial income. He congratulated officers for coming top in terms of the collection of Council Tax and near the top in the collection of business rates. He explained that the support of Ermine Street Housing to the Council's tenants had minimised the impact of the pandemic on rental income. He reported that the Council had estimated that £2.3m would have to be taken from reserves to cover the cost of the pandemic, but in the end just under £2m had been taken from reserves. He noted that the changing rules of the Public Works Loan Board had affected commercial investments and the Council's Investments. Just over £2m of underspends had been carried forward to this financial year.

Councillor Heather Williams welcomed the continued success of Ermine Street Housing but expressed concern regarding the possible long-term implications of underspends in the commercial investments budget. Councillor John Williams replied that the underspend was due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and he expected that the underspends would be spent in the current year.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain asked what percentage of commercial properties were unoccupied and how had that contributed to the loss of commercial income. Councillor John Williams agreed to provide Councillor

Chamberlain with a written response.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Peter McDonald seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and Council agreed the recommendations by affirmation.

Council

Agreed to

(a) Acknowledge the 2020/21 general fund revenue outturn position and the net underspend (after income from Taxation and Government Grants) in the year of £0.281 million and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the revised 2020/21 revenue budget;

(b) Acknowledge the consequent decrease in the General Fund as at 31 March 2021 of £1.994m to around £14.5m;

(c) In relation to the Capital Programme:

(i) Note the 2020/21 capital outturn of £43,252 million;

(ii) Approve the carry forwards of £2.081 million in relation to General Fund capital projects due mainly to slippage.

(iii) Approve additional lending of £5.237 million in 2021/22 to enable Ermine Street housing to meet its target of 500 property purchases.

8 (b) Cabinet, 6 September 2021: 2020/21 Provisional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn

Councillor John Williams presented this report. He explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had proved to be challenging, with the Council's housebuilding programme being particularly badly hit.

Councillor Sue Ellington asked whether the Council's housing stock was being upgraded to meet the authority's green agenda. Councillor John Batchelor explained that the all the new building would have excellent insulation and the new homes in Cambourne would be zero carbon. The Council's re-fit programme was expected to commence in the next few months, but with 5,500 existing homes it would take many years to complete. He confirmed that the properties in Cambourne would be included in the programme.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor John Batchelor seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation Council

Agreed to

(d) Note the 2020/21 revenue outturn position and the net underspend in the

year of £1.091 million, and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the approved 2020/21 revenue budget;

(e) Note the overall reduction in the Housing Revenue Account balance as at 31 March 2021 to £4.639 million;

(f) Approve the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget Carry Forwards in the sum of £0.035 million, in relation to Consultancy costs.

(g) In relation to the Capital Programme:

(iv) Note the 2020/21 capital outturn of £15.987 million;

(v) Approve the carry forwards to 2021/22 of £1.822 million in relation to HRA Housing improvements due mainly to slippage.

(vi) Approve carry forward amounts of £1.213 million to 2021/22 in relation to HRA housebuilding during 2020/21, due to slippage.

8 (c) Licensing Committee, 7 September 2021: Gambling Act 2005 - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, introduced this report on the revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005. He thanked the Licensing Officer for her work on this issue.

It was noted that the Licensing Committee had reviewed the policy and proposed an amendment, to include the following definition:
“The Gambling Act defines “child” as an individual who is less than 16 years old, and “young person” means an individual who is not a child but who is less than 18 years old.”

This amendment was proposed by Councillor Anna Bradnam and seconded by Councillor Brian Milnes. The amendment was agreed by affirmation.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion and by affirmation

Council

Agreed to adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005 for a period of up to three years from 31 January 2022, with the inclusion of the following sentence: “The Gambling Act defines “child” as an individual who is less than 16 years old, and “young person” means an individual who is not a child who is less than 18 years old.”

8 (d) Civic Affairs, 9 September 2021: Adoption of Model Code of Conduct

Councillor Heather Williams, as Chair of the Anti-Bullying Task and Finish Group, presented this report on the proposed new Model Code of Conduct, which was

unanimously supported by the Civic Affairs Committee. It was proposed that the new Code of Conduct come into force in May 2022, to allow district and parish councillors to be trained and for a new Register of Interests form to be drawn up.

Councillor Dr Claire Daunton seconded the recommendation. She explained that she had examined the original draft Code of Conduct with former Councillor Dr Douglas de Lacey, as Vice Chair and Chair of the Civic Affairs Committee.

Councillor Sue Ellington regretted that on occasion, members of the public erroneously alleged that councillors act in their own personal interests when making decisions and she believed that the new code of conduct would help to disprove this. The Leader shared Councillor Ellington's frustration and offered to feedback to the Council on her work as a member of the LGA's Task Group on Civility in public life.

Councillor Dr Aidan Van de Weyer explained that he was on the Anti-Bullying Task and Finish Group which had unanimously supported the new Model Code of Conduct. He thanked officers for their work on this and stated that, if adopted, the Council would need to communicate the significant changes to those affected.

The Monitoring Officer affirmed that under the new Model Code of Conduct councillors would only have to declare a pecuniary interest for themselves or their spouse and not for wider family. He reiterated that if the Code of Conduct was agreed, training on the new interests would be provided before coming into force in May 2022.

Councillor Deborah Roberts thanked the Anti-Bullying Task and Finish Group for its work on this issue. She hoped that the training would clearly explain the new rules regarding declaring interests for both district and parish councillors.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart asked why the new Model Code of Conduct was not being implemented immediately. The Monitoring Officer explained that there were over 106 parishes in the District and training needed to be provided. A new Register of Interests form would have to be drawn up and his view the current system was still working adequately and did not need to be immediately replaced.

A vote was taken and by affirmation

Council

Agreed to adopt the Model Code at Appendix 2 of the report and Guidance at Appendix 3 to take effect from May 2022 and authorised the Chief Executive to make the necessary changes to the Constitution.

9. Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet for Finance, presented this report which reviewed the Council's Medium Term Financial Statement, covering the years

2022/23 to 2026/27. He explained that the amount of funding from the Government was difficult to predict. It had been assumed that the New Homes Bonus would be abolished in 2023, but it now appeared that it would be replaced by something else. The results of the Fair Funding Review had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Bridget Smith thanked the Chief Finance Officer for his work in helping the Council to “weather the storm” caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Heather Williams agreed that officers had worked admirably, but according to page 175 the deficit two years ago had been £3m and so the situation had got worse. She suggested that the administration needed to curtail spending on its political aspirations to improve the Council’s finances. Councillor John Williams replied that this was not a fair comparison as it related to a different five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain suggested that the success of the financial strategy depended on the amount of income generated from its commercial properties, which was currently unclear. Councillor John Williams estimated that currently 90% of the Council’s commercial properties were occupied. Councillor Bridget Smith added that according to a recent report in the Times the cost of renting commercial properties in the area was reassuringly high. Councillor Neil Gough stated that if the Council decided to reduce the number of commercial properties that it was renting it would also have to decide to cut the services it provided.

Councillor Dr Aidan Van de Weyer stated that the cost of providing services to new homes was greater than the income from New Homes Bonus. Councillor John Williams agreed and added that the funds from the New Homes Bonus related to housing numbers in the Local Plan agreed by the previous administration. Councillor Heather Williams replied that the Local Plan had been agreed by the Council.

Councillor Deborah Roberts suggested that the authority should be more prudent when spending tax-payers money and not spend funds on political ambitious projects. Councillor Bridget Smith replied that the Council was not relying on Council Tax and government funding to pay for the services it delivered and the administration’s policies, such as providing grants for zero carbon projects, had the support of residents.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (19):
Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Dr Claire Daunton, Peter Fane, Corinne Garvie, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Bridget Smith, Dr Ian Sollom, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams

Against (8):
Councillors Ruth Betson, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Bunty Waters, Dr Richard Williams and Heather Williams

Abstain (0)

Council **Agreed** to

A) Acknowledge the projected changes in service spending and the overall resources available to the Council over the medium term.

B) Approve the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy at Appendix A and updated financial forecast at Appendix B.

10. Making of Foxton Neighbourhood Plan

This matter was discussed after Agenda Item 5.

Simon Buggey, Chairman of Foxton Parish Council, explained that the community had been widely consulted at the start of the process. The Neighbourhood Plan had enjoyed 96% support in the recent referendum after a turn out of 36%. Catherine Cairns had chaired the working group and reported that the process had been five and half years of hard work and the group had benefitted from knowledgeable and hard-working volunteers. She thanked officers for their support.

Councillor Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, congratulated the Fowlmere community on the completion of their Neighbourhood Plan, which was a successful conclusion to a project which had commenced in 2015. Councillor Deborah Roberts, local member for Fowlmere, thanked and congratulated her colleagues on Foxton Parish Council on their Neighbourhood Plan, which would benefit future generations. Councillor Heather Williams stated that she would support the Plan as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

Council **Noted**

A) That the referendum for the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan took place on 22 July 2021;

B) The decision made by the Chief Executive under delegated powers to make the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan as it was a successful referendum on 5 August 2021;

C) The final made version of the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan has been agreed and published on the Council’s website on the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan page.

11. Greater Cambridge Partnership

Councillor Neil Gough stated that there had been no meetings of the Greater Cambridge Executive Board since the last Council meeting. Councillor Heather Williams reported that the Greater Cambridge Joint Assembly had discussed travel to and around the city of Cambridge and opinion had been divided on the possible introduction of a congestion charge. Councillor Neil Gough assured Council that these issues would be reported back to Council after they were discussed by the Executive Board, which was the decision making body.

12. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Councillor Bridget Smith reported that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board had agreed to pay £350,000 for the development of Peterborough station, which she had opposed. The Board voted against the purchase of the IMet building. A new Chief Executive was due to be appointed in October. The previous Mayor's £100,000 housing scheme had been discontinued and South Cambridgeshire had secured funding for housing. Councillor Bridget Smith thanked Councillors John Batchelor and Neil Gough for their work on the Transport Committee.

Council **Noted** the report.

13. Oxford-Cambridge Arc - Update

The Leader updated Council on the progress being made on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc project.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed her frustration at the fact the report did not include what the Leader was saying at these meetings. She asked if minutes of the OxCam arc meetings could be shared. Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the Government ran these meetings and had decided to hold its meetings in private and not have a website. She offered to speak to the other Group Leaders about this issue.

Councillor Deborah Roberts expressed concern regarding the aim of the universities in the OxCam arc area to combine to build the largest science cluster in the world, as this proposed extra development was not in the best interests of the District's residents. Councillor Dr Richard Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest as employee of Cambridge University, although not in the life sciences section. He added that he did not support the proposed expansion. Councillor Bridget Smith replied that she could not speak for the universities.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart hoped that local environmental concerns would be reflected in the Local Plan. Councillor Nick Wright stated that the Wildlife Trust opposed the proposed development in the OxCam arc area and asked for the Leader's comments on this. He added that the administration had not provided any strategy or vision of what they expected this project to deliver for the District. Councillor Bridget Smith replied that she was the lead member on the OxCam arc's Environment Committee which was chaired by the Chief Executive. She had challenged the lead civil servant at a meeting of the Committee. The Council's aims and visions for development would be included in the emerging

Local Plan.

Councillor Nick Wright stated that his ward was under threat from development, which was not in the Local Plan and it was unclear how to oppose this.

Councillor Peter McDonald stated that the Council was fighting the Government's proposed development. The Government had refused the recent Freedom of Information Act request. The Leader added that the Government had refused to adopt the 120 cycleway guide in relation to the A428 or electrify the East West rail line.

14. Appointments to Committees and other bodies

Council **Noted** and **Endorsed** the decision made by the Chief Executive to appoint the Head of Climate, Environment & Waste (Olabode Esan) to replace the previous Head of Environment and Waste (Trevor Nicoll) as the officer representation on the Investment Partnership Boards.

15. Questions From Councillors

15 (a) From Councillor Sue Ellington

Can the lead member for planning please explain the criteria for deciding when enforcement action should be taken in cases of failure to comply with planning decisions?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, explained that paragraph 59 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlighted that planning enforcement was a discretionary process and stated that Councils should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control. This applied to all categories of planning enforcement and the Council's Enforcement Policy required the authority to seek a negotiated resolution first.

Councillor Dr Hawkins reported that she was aware of a number of construction sites where there had been delays in enforcement action. The guidance from the Government was that during the Covid-19 pandemic local authorities should only take enforcement action in exceptional circumstances. The Council was now reviewing this position and was keen to demonstrate that it took breaches of planning control very seriously.

In her supplementary question, Councillor Sue Ellington expressed her concern regarding the reputation of the Council. She highlighted a specific case in her village where retrospective planning permission had been refused, but still no enforcement action had been taken. Councillor Dr Hawkins asked Councillor Ellington to provide her with further details regarding this case after the meeting.

15 (b) From Councillor Graham Cone

Why does the Honey Hill site for the relocation of the Water Treatment Plant not

feature as land removed from greenbelt within the Local Plan proposals? Surely it would be in the interest of transparency to feature this on the interactive map given NECAAP and the moving of the Water Treatment Plant are hand in glove?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that it was important to differentiate between the functions of the Council which was the planning authority and that of the City Council, which was the landowner and developer. The move of the Water Treatment Plant will allow the Council to develop the current site, but Anglian Water's Development Consent Order was an entirely separate statutory planning process from the Local Plan and will be determined under different legislation, so it would be inappropriate to include it as part of the Local Plan consultation process.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Graham Cone suggested that there was no operation need for Anglian Water to move the plant and so the Council could pull out of the Housing Infrastructure Bid. Councillor Dr Hawkins replied that it was not possible for the Council to pull out of the Housing Infrastructure Bid, as this arrangement was between Cambridge City Council and Anglian Water.

15 (c) From Councillor Dr Richard Williams

How many requests for new Tree Protection Orders were received by the Council in the years (1st January - 31st December inclusive) 2019; 2020 and the year 2021 (to date), and how many new Tree Protection Orders were made by the Council as LPA in each of those years respectively?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning replied that there had been five requests in 2019 and one had been made. 33 requests had been received in 2020 and four orders had been made, with two under consideration and two more awaiting more information. 12 requests had been received so far this year and five of these were an advanced stage of completion.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams expressed concern at these figures. He asked whether all those who had made a Tree Preservation Order were being updated on its progress and whether there were enough officers to process the requests and carry out the associated work. Councillor Dr Hawkins agreed to check that residents were being updated on their Tree Preservation Order requests. She added that an extra officer had been recruited to the Trees team and she was confident that they had the resources to carry out the work.

15 (d) From Councillor Heather Williams

Councillor Heather Williams asked if the Leader or any member of Cabinet, if they were aware of any major developments that had not been shared with all members of the Council, as was the case of the Fakenham development.

The Leader replied that there were not any major developments that she was aware of that had not been shared with Council. She added that she had attended a meeting with the Joint Director of Planning regarding the Fakenham

development days before it was announced.

As her supplementary question, Councillor Heather Williams asked if the Leader had in fact been aware of the Fakenham development two months before it was announced, which the Leader denied.

15 (e) From Councillor Dr Ian Sollom

Given the extremely disappointing response of the Chancellor to this Council's call to scrap the cut to Universal Credit at the end of this month, what preparations has the Council made for the inevitable hardship this will cause for residents receiving Universal Credit?

Councillor John Williams explained that over 200 residents had been assisted through the Council's DHP and Hardship support funds. The total financial assistance awarded exceeded £107,000. Residents facing hardship were encouraged to contact the Council who could be offered financial assistance, advice from officers and directed towards the Citizens Advice Bureau.

As his supplementary question, Councillor Dr Sollom asked how this information was been disseminated to residents. Councillor John Williams reported that the Council provided parish councils and community groups with a weekly update. The information would also be included in the next parish bulletin.

16. Notices of Motion

16 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor Dr Ian Sollom

Councillor Dr Ian Sollom proposed and Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the following motion:

"Council notes that the draft First Proposals for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan identifies an urgent need for new strategic water supply infrastructure to provide for the longer-term needs of the plan and protect the chalk aquifer that supplies much of the area with water.

"Council further notes that Water Resources East timeline to address these issues through their new integrated water management strategy will only see new water supply infrastructure available from the mid 2030's, resulting in further deterioration of both the aquifer itself, and the chalk stream habitats it feeds.

"Council also notes the requirement by the Environment Agency for the integrated water management strategy to include long-term nature recovery and resilience.

"Council therefore resolves that the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government highlighting these issues and urging them to find ways to support the water industry to deliver both

the new water supply infrastructure and the improved water catchment management to restore the chalk stream habitats for South Cambridgeshire on a much faster timeline by the end of the decade."

Councillor Dr Sollom explained that the District's wetlands were drying out and the chalk aquifers were being over-extracted. The Council could work with its partners to tackle this issue.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart declared his support for the motion, as the District chalk streams were under threat. He asserted that the development in the Local Plan should be dependent on the water supply being resolved. He suggested that the abstraction licences needed to be reviewed.

Councillor Deborah Roberts reported that the District's MP had also raised concerns regarding the District's water supply. She added that similar concerns had been raised by councillors over the last 30 years, but that it was hypocritical of the current administration to support extra development in the area, when this was the real cause of the problem.

Councillor Nick Wright stated that current administration was in control of development in the District and this was causing the pressure on water supply.

Councillor Sue Ellington stated that the administration was responsible for agreeing where new development was built. She was more concerned with where the water from new developments would go, as Uttons Drove sewage work would need to process an extra 1.4 billion litres.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins, acknowledged that this was not a new issue and asked what the previous administration had done to mitigate this problem. The Council was not the water authority and needed to work with its partners to address the challenge of water supply in the District.

The Chair stated that the Government needed to know whether water could be supplied to new homes in the District and so it was appropriate that the Leader and Chief Executive wrote to the Government on this issue.

Councillor Pippa Heylings reminded Members that the Council had declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and the authority had agreed a doubling nature strategy. The new Local Plan would be obliged to support green infrastructure and developers would have to ensure that chalk streams were revitalised.

Councillor Ian Sollom thanked Members for their contributions and he acknowledged their concerns regarding the impact of new developments on the District's water supply. He suggested that proper water management could address the problem and the Council could help to provide the necessary infrastructure. He urged members to agree the motion

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

In favour (24):
Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Dr Claire Daunton, Peter Fane, Corinne Garvie, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Bridget Smith, Dr Ian Sollom, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and John Williams

Against (1):
Councillor Deborah Roberts

Abstain (1):
Councillor Sue Ellington

Council **Agreed** the following motion:

Council notes that the draft First Proposals for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan identifies an urgent need for new strategic water supply infrastructure to provide for the longer-term needs of the plan and protect the chalk aquifer that supplies much of the area with water.

Council further notes that Water Resources East timeline to address these issues through their new integrated water management strategy will only see new water supply infrastructure available from the mid 2030's, resulting in further deterioration of both the aquifer itself, and the chalk stream habitats it feeds.

Council also notes the requirement by the Environment Agency for the integrated water management strategy to include long-term nature recovery and resilience.

Council therefore resolves that the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government highlighting these issues and urging them to find ways to support the water industry to deliver both the new water supply infrastructure and the improved water catchment management to restore the chalk stream habitats for South Cambridgeshire on a much faster timeline by the end of the decade.

16 (b) Standing in the name of Councillor Dr Richard Williams

Councillor Dr Richard Williams proposed and Councillor Heather Williams the following motion:
"Believing, as this Council does, that "planning works best when local communities are empowered", "to shape local areas", the Council calls for all Town and Parish Councils in South Cambs to be given the unimpeded power to require that a planning application in their area be determined by the Planning Committee rather than by officers."

Councillor Dr Richard Williams explained that this motion was designed to empower parish councils to be able to refer planning applications to the Planning Committee. He praised parish councils, which represented their communities and

were attended by district councillors and residents. He suggested that if the motion was rejected, the Council was stating that it did not trust the District's parish councils.

Councillor Heather Williams reminded Council that in May 2020 Planning Committee had narrowly rejected the proposal to allow parish councils to refer planning applications to the Planning Committee. The assurance had been given that all parish councils would be consulted on the new scheme of delegation, but this had not happened.

Councillor Deborah Roberts asserted that the Council should carry out what it had pledged to do and consult with the parish councils, which were democratically elected bodies and represented their local communities.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart suggested that currently the right number of applications were going to the Planning Committee and expressed concern that if parish councils were able to refer matters to the Committee it would become overloaded and decisions would be delayed. Councillor Brian Milnes agreed and added that many concerns expressed about planning applications at a lower level were not material considerations and he did want to see the Planning Committee dealing with trivial matters.

Councillor Sue Ellington explained that a parish council in her ward was frustrated their views were not being listened to. She asserted that if any concerns expressed were not material considerations the parish council could be informed of that, whilst any material considerations could be properly discussed.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that the Council consulted with parish councils, as laid out in Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning Act 2015, which involved notifying parish councils of any applications in their area and treating them as consultees. She reported that allowing parish councils to refer any items to the Planning Committee implied that they had control of the agenda, which was unlawful and this power had been removed by the previous administration. Quarterly meetings were held with planning area teams, which allowed parish councillors to engage directly with officers. Although only four parish councils attended the last meeting, when 14 had been invited. Councillor Nick Wright suggested that this indicated that the Council was losing the confidence of parish councils. He estimated that in 2004 80% of applications were determined by officers but now it was approximately 99%. He reported that district councillors also brought up non-material considerations. He concluded that the Council should support its communities and the impressive work of the parish councils.

Councillor Ruth Betson reported that Cambourne Town Council has its own Planning Committee that meets regularly, but it was being side-lined by the Council. She urged that the Council supports this motion, to ensure input from the District's parish councils, town councils and its communities.

Councillor Pippa Heylings stated that she was committed to assisting the District's communities and she met regularly with its parish councils. The

planning scheme of delegation was being kept under review and the planning development group discussed applications.

Councillor John Batchelor explained that the Council had carried out a peer review of its planning delegation process and had set up a planning development group. Parish councils were informed why the criteria for taking the application to the Planning Committee had not been met. He estimated that there used to be 200 delegation requests a year but this had now decreased to about 50.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain suggested that if the authority was a listening Council, it should listen to the parish councils and support the motion.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams concluded that the objective of the motion was to empower our local communities, not just engage with them. Currently an officer could veto a request from a parish council that an application be determined by the Planning Committee, whilst this motion would empower parish councils and give them the power of effectively calling-in an officer decision.

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

In favour (9):
Councillors Ruth Betson, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Bunty Waters, Dr Richard Williams, Heather Williams and Nick Wright

Against (18):
Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Dr Claire Daunton, Peter Fane, Corinne Garvie, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dr Ian Sollom, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams

Abstain (0)

Council **Rejected** this motion.

16 (c) Standing in the name of Councillor Geoff Harvey

The meeting had been in progress for four hours and under section 9 of the Standing Orders as laid out in the Constitution, Council voted by affirmation for the meeting to continue.

Councillor Geoff Harvey proposed and Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the following motion:
“The latest reports from the National Committee for Climate Change such as the "UK Housing. Fit for the Future?" and the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget "warn that the UK’s legally-binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK buildings" and that UK homes are woefully unprepared for climate change". The Council's Zero Carbon Strategy also recognises the high level of emissions from existing housing. In order to meet our district-wide ambitions for net zero within the

applicable legal frameworks, there is a need for practical outcomes which reduce carbon emissions. Listed and historic buildings form part of our building stock and a special part due to their cultural importance individually and within the wider setting. Many homeowners are interested in contributing to the fight against climate change. There is a need to ensure the vital cultural assets are preserved whilst enabling homeowners to adapt these homes to the changing climate. Following a recommendation from CEAC, the Council committed to adopting a proactive approach to the retrofitting of listed and historic buildings and to the weighing of the balance between conservation and the reduction of carbon emissions.

“This Council notes that

“Planning law establishes the principle that ‘harm’ to a heritage asset should be weighed against ‘public benefit’.
and
that though the weighting of the balance is subject to statutory guidance, the assessment of ‘public benefit’ cannot be blind to climate change nor to the context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and its adoption of a Zero Carbon Strategy.

“It is for this reason that this Council resolves that:

i. In the officer reports accompanying applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent the reports will contain information making clear the way in which the balance has been made between public benefit, including where that benefit includes climate considerations, and the preservation of historic fabric.
ii. Where appropriate officers will seek the advice of the Council’s sustainability officer in addition to experts in conservation to contribute to the assessment exercise.”

Councillor Geoff Harvey explained that this motion was about conservation and heritage, set in the wider context of planning law. He asked Council to support this motion which would balance the needs to protect the historic buildings with the need to address climate change. Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the motion. She explained that this motion was ensuring that the Planning Committee received more information whilst balancing the different factors in their decision making.

Councillor Dr Claire Daunton stated that the carbon footprint of historic buildings could be reduced without compromising the actual building itself. Councillor Peter Fane expressed his support for the motion. He stated that retrofitting historic buildings was required to meet climate change targets, as there were 80 conservation areas in the District.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart hoped that suitable compromises could be found that maintained the character of the historic buildings in question, whilst substantially reducing their carbon footprint.

Councillor Heather Williams declared her support for the motion and she

recognised the need to balance the need to improve a building's energy efficiency whilst still maintaining its character. She stated that officers' impartiality must not be compromised.

Councillor Deborah Roberts respected the research carried out by Councillor Geoff Harvey in preparing his motion but was concerned that residents such as herself could be denied the ability to heat their homes through burning wood and coal.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams expressed his support for the motion, but he hoped that its implementation would not delay the planning process.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins recognised the challenge of making a historic building more energy efficient and the heritage section of the Council's website offered advice on this.

Councillor Geoff Harvey agreed with Councillor Heather Williams that officers were conscientious and under pressure. He understood Councillor Nigel Cathcart's concern and hoped that a record of case histories could be compiled to assist future projects.

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

In favour (24):
Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Dr Claire Daunton, Sue Ellington, Peter Fane, Corinne Garvie, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Brian Milnes, Deborah Roberts, Dr Ian Sollom, Dr Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, Dr Richard Williams and John Williams

Against (0)

Abstain (1):
Councillor Nigel Cathcart

Council **Agreed** the following motion:

The latest reports from the National Committee for Climate Change such as the "UK Housing. Fit for the Future?" and the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget "warn that the UK's legally-binding climate change targets will not be met without the near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from UK buildings" and that UK homes are woefully unprepared for climate change". The Council's Zero Carbon Strategy also recognises the high level of emissions from existing housing. In order to meet our district-wide ambitions for net zero within the applicable legal frameworks, there is a need for practical outcomes which reduce carbon emissions. Listed and historic buildings form part of our building stock and a special part due to their cultural importance individually and within the wider setting. Many homeowners are interested in contributing to the fight against

climate change. There is a need to ensure the vital cultural assets are preserved whilst enabling homeowners to adapt these homes to the changing climate. Following a recommendation from CEAC, the Council committed to adopting a proactive approach to the retrofitting of listed and historic buildings and to the weighing of the balance between conservation and the reduction of carbon emissions.

This Council notes that

Planning law establishes the principle that ‘harm’ to a heritage asset should be weighed against ‘public benefit’.
and
that though the weighting of the balance is subject to statutory guidance, the assessment of ‘public benefit’ cannot be blind to climate change nor to the context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and its adoption of a Zero Carbon Strategy.

It is for this reason that this Council resolves that:

i. In the officer reports accompanying applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent the reports will contain information making clear the way in which the balance has been made between public benefit, including where that benefit includes climate considerations, and the preservation of historic fabric.
ii. Where appropriate officers will seek the advice of the Council’s sustainability officer in addition to experts in conservation to contribute to the assessment exercise.

16 (d) Standing in the name of Councillor Heather Williams

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the following motion:
“At the next meeting of full council a report will be presented to council in relation to planning performance. It will clearly show the number of applications determined within the statutory time period, how many of those had extensions agreed and how many applications were awaiting determination at the end of each month. This report will cover the last 24months (September 2019 to September 2021)”

Councillor Heather Williams explained that this motion was being brought back to Council to request the necessary statistics on this matter.

Councillor Dr Aidan Van de Weyer recommended that this motion be deferred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. This recommendation was seconded by Councillor Neil Gough.

A vote was taken and by affirmation Council agreed to refer the following motion to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee:

At the next meeting of full council a report will be presented to council in relation to planning performance. It will clearly show the number of applications

determined within the statutory time period, how many of those had extensions agreed and how many applications were awaiting determination at the end of each month. This report will cover the last 24months (September 2019 to September 2021)

17. Chair's Engagements

Council **Noted** the Chair's engagement since the last Council meeting.

The Meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.