

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 23 February 2017 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Alex Colyer	Interim Chief Executive
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Monitoring Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Pippa Corney, Simon Crocker, Jose Hales, Philippa Hart, Caroline Hunt, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood and Mick Martin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Brian Burling declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 9(e), Swavesey Byeway Rate, as a rate payer. He left the room during whilst this item was discussed.

Councillor Sue Ellington declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9(e), Swavesey Byeways Rate, as a resident of Swavesey.

Councillor Peter Johnson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9(b), South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: Policy SS/5 – Waterbeach New Town: Boundary of the Major Development Site, as the Council's Outside Body representative with the Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey.

3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

It was noted that Councillors needed to update their register of interests whenever their circumstances changed.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Task and Finish Group: Helping businesses in our villages to succeed and prosper

Councillor Peter Topping stated that, in light of the recommendations of the Council's peer review, a Task and Finish Group was being set up to encourage the District's businesses under the Chairmanship of Councillor Grenville Chamberlain. Members were encouraged to volunteer to serve on this Group.

Meeting with Housing and Planning Minister

Councillor Topping announced that he had met with Gavin Barwell, the Housing and Planning Minister, who had explained the details in the Government's housing white paper and had expressed his keenness to meet again with representatives of this authority.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

7. PETITIONS

None.

8. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**9 (a) Appointment of Local Returning Officer for Combined Authority Mayoral Election**

The Chairman proposed the recommendation by explaining that the Council needed to appoint a Returning Officer responsible for organising and delivering the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections in South Cambridgeshire. Councillor Nick Wright seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley stated that whilst he had no objection to the appointment, he opposed the election of a Mayor for the combined authority, which he considered an unnecessary waste of public money.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (35)

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Ben Shelton, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against (8)

Councillors John Batchelor, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Cicely Murfitt, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Edd Stonham and John Williams.

Abstain (1)

Councillor Anna Bradnam.

Therefore Council

AGREED That the Interim Chief Executive be appointed Returning Officer for the South Cambridgeshire area for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority elections to be held in May 2017.

9 (b) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: Policy SS/5 - Waterbeach New Town: Boundary of the Major Development Site

Councillor Robert Turner proposed this recommendation for a modification to the boundary of the Major Development Site for the new town at Waterbeach, following consultation with Historic England. Councillor Peter Johnson seconded this recommendation as a local member.

Councillor Ingrid Tregoing expressed concern regarding the proximity of the new town boundary to Fox Cottages. Councillor Robert Turner assured Councillor Tregoing that issues such as green separation were still to be determined.

Council unanimously

AGREED that a proposed modification to the Major Development Site boundary of Waterbeach new town (Policy SS/5) as shown on Inset Map H of the submitted Policies Map be put forward to the examination, as shown on the map attached to the report.

9 (c) Corporate Plan Priorities 2017-2022 (Cabinet, 9 February 2017)

Councillor Nick Wright proposed this recommendation, by stating that both the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Cabinet had discussed and agreed the proposed Corporate Plan, which set out the Council's vision, objectives and actions for 2017-22. Councillor Peter Topping seconded the recommendation.

Local Plan and the building of homes

It was understood that speculative planning applications were receiving permission due to the fact that the Local Plan had not yet been agreed. It was suggested that this made it difficult for the Council to achieve the objectives in the Corporate Plan. It was further suggested that developers were not progressing with the construction of thousands of homes that had received planning permission. Concern was expressed at how the character of certain villages could be changed as a consequence of development. In response, Councillor Lynda Harford explained that the Inspector had rejected the Council and City Council's Joint Local Plan in February 2014 and unfortunately getting the Plan re-inspected was a slow process. She expressed the hope that the Government's Housing White Paper would compel developers to build homes once planning permission had been granted.

Measuring performance

In response to concerns regarding how performance would be measured Councillor Topping stated that there was a row in the Corporate Plan table entitled "How we will measure this" and Councillor Wright added that quarterly reports would be taken to Cabinet to ensure that the Council was meeting its aspirations detailed in the Corporate Plan.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer suggested that the Corporate Plan should include targets on sustainable development and tackling climate change.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (29)

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, David Whiteman-Downes, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against (13)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Doug Cattermole, Neil Davies, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Des O'Brien, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Abstain (5)

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Peter Johnson, Cicely Murfitt and Ingrid Tregging.

Therefore Council

AGREED the Corporate Plan setting out the Council's vision, objectives and actions for 2017-2022.

9 (d) Medium Term Financial Strategy (General Fund Budget 2017/18 including Council Tax setting), Housing Revenue Account (including Housing rents), Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy (Cabinet, 9 February 2017)

Councillor Simon Edwards proposed the recommendation, which asked Council to approve the financial strategies and budgets, as detailed in the reports and appendices. Councillor Peter Topping seconded the recommendation.

Minor amendment

Councillor Edwards explained that the proposed inflationary increases of garage rents for 2017/18 was 1.9% and not 2.4% as stated in the report.

Spending of reserves

Councillor Edwards explained that it was not sustainable for the Council to continue spending its reserves to meet its spending commitments and this was why it was proposed that £0 would be spent from reserves in 2017/18.

Leader's Portfolio

Councillor Edwards explained that the reduction in the budget for the Leader's Portfolio was due to recharges. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of Leader's Portfolio Holder meetings during 2016/17.

Council Tax

The proposed increase in Council Tax was supported with no councillors speaking against it. Members of the opposition group contrasted this with the Cambridgeshire County Council's Conservative Group's decision to argue for a Council Tax freeze for their authority.

Scrutiny

Councillor Tony Orgee reported that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had supported the proposed Council Tax increase and had understood that savings were generated through staff turnover, although no single service was responsible for this and so it had to be monitored over the Council throughout the year.

Renting of communal rooms

Councillor Ingrid Tregoing expressed concern about the possible impact on community groups of charging for the use communal rooms. The rooms were free for residents to use. Councillor Harford assured Council that the impact of this charge was being carefully assessed.

Ermine Street Housing

In response to concerns whether the Council could be confident that Ermine Street Housing would continue to deliver the income as projected in the accounts, Councillor Edwards explained that Ermine Street Housing was projected to bring in an income of £600,000 and the position would be carefully monitored.

Council thanked all officers involved in the production of these accounts.

A vote was taken and were cast as follows

In favour (34)

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Peter Johnson, Ray Manning, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Buntly Waters, David Whiteman-Downes, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

Against (1)

Councillor Deborah Roberts

Abstain (11)

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Doug Cattermole, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Ingrid Tregoing, Aidan Van de Weyer and John Williams.

Council

AGREED to

Revenue and capital – General Fund (GF)

- (a) Approve the revenue estimates for 2017-18 as shown in the **GF BSR Section 5**.
- (b) Approve the precautionary items for the GF, GF BSR Appendix B.
- (c) Approve the GF revenue forecasts as set out in GF BSR Section 6.
- (d) Instruct the Executive Management Team to identify additional income / savings of £163k for 2017-18, rising to £1,531k from 2018-19.
- (e) Approve the GF capital programme and associated funding up to the year ended 31 March 2022, as set out in Appendix D.
- (f) Instruct the Head of Finance, on the basis of the proposals set out in the GF BSR, to prepare formal papers to set the council tax requirement and amount of council tax at the Council meeting on 23 February 2017.

- (g) Set the Council Tax Requirement for 2017-18 at £8,234,344.17.
- (h) Set the amount of Council Tax for each of the relevant categories of dwelling in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 on the basis of the District Council Tax for general expenses on a Band D property of £135.31 plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, details of those precepts and their effect to be circulated with the formal resolution required at the Council meeting.

Revenue – Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- (i) Approve the HRA revenue budget as shown in the HRA Summary Forecast 2016-17 to 2021-22 in Appendix I of the HRA Budget Setting Report at Appendix 2 to this report.
- (j) Approve the retention of the balance of the 4 year savings target included as part of the 2016-17 HRA Budget Setting Report to mitigate the impact of some of the changes in national housing policy, recognising that the net savings proposed from 2017-18 over-deliver against the profile of £250,000 per annum for 4 years, reducing the balance to be sought in the remaining 3 years to £600,480.

Review of Rents and Charges

- (k) Approve that social housing rents for existing tenants be reduced by 1%, in line with legislative requirements, with effect from 3rd April 2017.
- (l) Approve that affordable rents are reviewed in line with rent legislation, to ensure that rents charged are no more than 80% of market rent, with this figure then reduced by 1% as with social housing. Local policy is to cap affordable rents at the lower level of Local Housing Allowance, which will result in a rent freeze from 3rd April 2017.
- (m) Approve inflationary increases of 1.9% in garage rents for 2017-18, in line with the base rate of inflation for the year assumed in the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- (n) Approve the proposed service charges for HRA services and facilities provided to both tenants and leaseholders, as shown in Appendix B of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

Housing Capital

- (o) Approve the latest budget, spend profile and funding mix for each of the schemes in the new build programme, as detailed in Section 5 and Appendix E of the HRA Budget Setting Report, recognising the most up to date information available as each scheme progresses through the design, planning, build contract and completion process.
- (p) Approve earmarking of the required level of additional funding for new build investment between 2017-18 and 2021-22 to ensure that commitments can be met in respect of the investment of all right to buy receipts retained by the authority, up to the end of December 2016. This expenditure will either take the form of HRA new build, with the 70% top up met by capital receipts anticipated

from the sale of self-build plots or could alternatively be grant made to a registered provider, where the registered provider will provide the 70% top up to build new homes.

- (q) Approve the capital budget proposals, both bids and savings, detailed in Appendix G(2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- (r) Approve the capital amendments, detailed in Appendix H of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which include the capital proposals in Appendix G(2), along-side re-profiling of investment, increase and re-allocation of resource for new build schemes and budget to fund the up-front costs for self-build plots, with the latter fully met from the resulting capital receipt.
- (s) Approval of the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix J of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

Treasury Management

- (t) Approve the borrowing and investment strategy for the year to March 2018, Appendix F.
- (u) Note the amendment to the capital financing requirement table, as described below and approve the prudential indicators required by the Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities for the year to 31 March 2018, Appendix G.
- (v) Approve the Capital Strategy 2017-18 to 2021-22, Appendix H.
- (w) Approve any unspent New Homes Bonus money allocated to the City Deal to be rolled into 2018-19.

General

- (x) Gives delegated authority to the Interim Chief Executive to issue the final version of the Estimates Book, incorporating any amendments required from the council's decisions.

In addition to resolution (g) above, Council **AGREED** the following statutory resolution in respect of Council Tax for 2017-18:

That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017-18 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| (a) | £91,867,564 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act (gross expenditure including parish precepts, the Housing Revenue Account and additions to reserves) |
| (b) | £78,544,628 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act (gross income including the Housing Revenue Account and use of reserves) |
| (c) | £13,322,936 | being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as |

its council tax requirement for the year (net expenditure to be met from council tax) being the district amount of £8,234,340 and the parish precepts of £5,088,596

- (d) **£218.93** being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax for a band D property for the District including parishes)
- (e) **£5,088,596** being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (parish precepts)
- (f) **£135.31** being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (average council tax for a Band D property for the District excluding parishes), the amounts being for each of the categories of dwellings shown below in **Table 1**.
- (h) In accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, the basic amounts of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a special item relates are shown by adding the amounts for band D for the District Council in **Table 1** and **Appendix A**
- (i) In accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands are shown by adding the amounts for each band in **Table 1** and **Appendix A**.

That it be noted that for the year 2017-18 Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in **Table 1**:

Table 1	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
County Council	793.6 2	925.8 9	1058. 16	1,190. 43	1,454. 97	1,719. 51	1,984. 05	2,380. 86
Police & Crime Commissioner	124.5 0	145.2 5	166.0 0	186.7 5	228.2 5	269.7 5	311.2 5	373.5 0
District Council	90.21	105.2 4	120.2 8	135.3 1	165.3 8	195.4 5	225.5 2	270.6 2
Fire Authority	44.52	51.94	59.36	66.78	81.62	96.46	111.3 0	133.5 6

and

- j) that the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts set out in **Appendix B** as the

amounts of council tax for the year 2017-18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown in **Appendix B**.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION IN RESPECT OF SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX

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

p		£	%
District Council	General Expenses	135.31	+3.84%
	Special Expenses for Parish Precepts (average)	83.62	+5.51%
County Council		1,190.43	+2.00%
Police & Crime Commissioner		186.75	+1.97%
Fire Authority		66.78	+1.92%
Total		1,662.89	+2.31%

On these figures the council tax would range from £1,052.85 for Band A to £3,439.02 for Band H before any discounts or benefits.

Appendix C shows the General Fund summary including Parish precepts and the final Formula Grant figure.

9 (e) Swavesey Byways Rate

Councillor Brian Burling left the Chamber whilst this item was being discussed.

Councillor Robert Turner proposed and Councillor Nick Wright seconded the recommendation from the Swavesey Byeways Committee.

Council unanimously

AGREED

- (a) to maintain the current level of byeway maintenance for the period 2017/18.
- (b) to levy a rate at £1.10 to fund the required maintenance for the period 2017/18.

10. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE LEADER

10 (a) From Councillor Philippa Hart for the Leader of Council (question deferred from the last Council meeting)

In the absence of Councillor Philippa Hart, Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer asked this question: "Please can the Leader tell us where he estimates we are on the timetable and

what ongoing preparations are underway to deliver a failure-free devolution.”

Councillor Peter Topping provided details on the progress being made on the setting-up of the Combined Authority and he explained that the Council was working with its partners to ensure that this was a success.

10 (b) Questions asked without notice

Question from Councillor Andrew Fraser

Councillor Andrew Fraser explained that in response to questioning from Councillor John Williams at the Cabinet meeting on 17 November 2016 it had been made clear that Ermine Street Housing was not being investigated by HMRC. However a leaflet from the Liberal Democrat political group had been delivered to several houses in Fulbourn stating that the tax affairs of Ermine Street housing were under investigation.

Councillor Fraser then asked “Can the Leader explain what the Council are doing to stop any future “Fake News” items being published by the Liberal Democrats?”

Councillor Simon Edwards responded on behalf of the Leader. He criticised the Liberal Democrat leaflet for calling into question the good name of Ermine Street Housing, which was an ethical landlord, set up by the Council with full support from the Liberal Democrats. He added that the leaflet was an insult to the three qualified accountants on the company's Board and the officers who worked hard for the company. He also expressed concern regarding the impact the leaflet could have had on existing and prospective tenants. He understood that the Board had warned the Liberal Democrats that legal action would be taken if such allegations were repeated.

Question from Councillor Kevin Cuffley

Councillor Kevin Cuffley asked: could the Leader confirm whether or not the Council operated a fair and robust system for the processing of taxi licence applications.

Councillor Mark Howell, Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, answered this question on behalf of the Leader. He stated that the recent article in the press had been misleading and had unfairly singled out the Council which had responded openly to a Freedom of Information Act request when other authorities had not replied. He assured members that the Council operated a robust and unbiased system for processing taxi licence applications, where Hearing Appeal Panels considered the suitability of the applicant. It was noted that the Council had only lost one appeal in the Magistrates Court over the last two years.

Question from Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer

How many residents of South Cambridgeshire are non-UK EU citizens and what proportion of residents does this represent? Given the crucial role that EU citizens play in the economy and the society of our district, what representations has the Council made to Government and to our MPs concerning their status after we leave the EU? If none, would the Leader consider ensuring that Government and our MPs are fully aware of the terrible impact the current uncertainty is having on our residents' personal lives and on economic decision-making?

Councillor Peter Topping recalled that according to the 2011 census 14% of the District's workforce were from European Union countries. He confirmed that the District's MPs were aware of the importance of the region's economy to the UK. He expressed the hope that the current uncertainty would be resolved and that non-UK EU citizens would be permitted to remain in the District.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

None.

12. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman and Vice-Chairman's engagements since the last Council meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 25 May at 2pm and not 22 May as stated in the agenda.

The Chairman explained that it was likely that an additional Council meeting would have to be scheduled before then in order to appoint the authority's new Chief Executive.

The Meeting ended at 3.55 p.m.
