

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

- PRESENT:** Councillor David McCraith – Chairman  
Councillor Brian Burling – Vice-Chairman
- Councillors:** David Bard, Val Barrett, John Batchelor, Cllr Ruth Betson, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Buntly Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright
- Officers:** Beverly Agass Chief Executive  
Rory McKenna Principal Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Kathrin John Democratic Services Team Leader

### **BRIEFING ON SAFEGUARDING**

Councillor Sue Ellington, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, introduced a briefing on Safeguarding issues relevant to a Councillor's role. Anita Goddard, Head of Housing and Property Services, then provided Members with a briefing on the key legal duties and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. In so doing she noted that more in depth training would be provided to Members in the new year.

In response to a request, it was agreed that the PowerPoint slides used for the briefing should be circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, thanked Councillor Ellington and the Head of Housing and Property Services for the briefing.

### **PRESENTATION TO NICOLE STIMSON**

The Chairman announced that Nicole Stimson in the Council's Communications Team had been nominated for Apprentice of the Year by her line manager. The award was part of the Hunts Business Awards, sponsored by the Hunts Post newspaper. Nicole was undertaking her apprenticeship with the Council via Huntingdonshire Regional College and was a great asset to the Council. She had been runner up in the awards and had been highly commended by the judges.

The Chairman was delighted to present Nicole with her runner's up certificate at the meeting and, on behalf of the Council, congratulated her on her achievement.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Henry Batchelor, Nigel Cathcart, Simon Crocker, Jose Hales, Cicily Murfitt, Edd Stonham and David Whiteman-Downes.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made as follows:

- Councillor Andrew Fraser declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to item 8(a) (Ermine Street Housing Investment Limit) in his capacity as one of the Council's representatives on the Ermine Street Housing Limited Board. Councillor Fraser indicated his intention to withdraw from the meeting during discussion of the item.
- Councillor Richard Turner declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to item 8(a) (Ermine Street Housing Investment Limit) in his capacity as one of the Council's representatives on the Ermine Street Housing Limited Board. Councillor Fraser indicated his intention to withdraw from the meeting during discussion of the item.

## 3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

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

## 4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 28th September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and approved for signature by the Chairman, subject to the following:

- Councillor Douglas de Lacey pointed out that the word "Council's" in the third paragraph of Minute 10 (Neighbourhood Planning) (page 4) should be amended to read "Councillors".
- Councillor John Batchelor commented that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority had made a bid for £193 million from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund in respect of regeneration of the brownfield site referred to in the fourth bullet point of Minute 11 (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) (page 7), rather than £200,000 as indicated in that minute.
- With respect to Minute 13(a) (Motion from Councillor Tim Wotherspoon), Councillor Bridget Smith drew attention to the need to correct the first sentence by the replacement of "£5,000" with "£50,000".
- Councillor Philippa Hart indicated that she had not been present at the meeting and therefore her name should be deleted from the recorded voting list at the conclusion of Minute 13 (a) (Motion from Councillor Tim Wotherspoon) (page 13).
- Councillor Douglas de Lacey highlighted the omission of the name of the seconder in respect of the motion in Minute 13(d) (Motion from Councillor Aiden Van de Weyer).
- Councillor John Williams pointed out that his name had incorrectly been recorded as "Williamson" in Minute 13(b) (Motion from Councillor David Bard) (page 14).
- Councillor David Bard drew attention to the need to replace the word "vole" with "vote" in the third paragraph of Minute 13(b) (Motion from Councillor David Bard).

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman of Council announced that his reception had been held at Wimpole Hall on November 3rd 2017. He thanked those Members who had attended the event but

was disappointed to note that 37 Councillors had not replied to the invitation. It was proposed in future to seek a donation to the Chairman's Charity from those Councillors not responding to the invitation.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, drew the Council's attention to the following matters:

- The Leader noted that it was the Chairman's birthday and, together with the Council, wished the Chairman a happy birthday.
- The Leader was delighted to welcome Councillor Mick Martin to the Council meeting following a period of absence owing to ill health.
- The Leader updated the Council on his discussions with the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner at a recent meeting.
- The Leader provided an update on a meeting with Lord Adonis, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). In particular, he referred to the Commission's interim report which had been recently published on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor, noting that the NIC had called upon the Government to allocate funding for infrastructure including enhanced transport links and to unlock housing sites.
- The Leader commented that Members and parish councils had recently received an update on the current position with the Local Plan and including correspondence received from the Inspectors. He had felt that Members and parishes should have that information. It was acknowledged that appropriate checks should have been undertaken to ensure that the Inspectors were aware of the intention to publish the working correspondence. Reference was made the fact that the Inspectors had written to both Councils to make it clear that their final conclusions would be in their final report to the Councils. In that context, the Leader emphasised that the views of the Inspectors were fully respected.

## **6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions from the public had been received.

## **7. PETITIONS**

No petitions for consideration by Council had been received.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **8 (a) Ermine Street Housing Investment Limit**

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented a report which invited the Council to consider increasing the maximum investment limit from the Council's cash reserves with Ermine Street Housing from £35 million to £45 million, while retaining the maximum investment at 60% of the total investment portfolio. He outlined the rationale for the proposal and, in particular, emphasised the increased flexibility that would be achieved.

In response to comments that it would have been helpful if the Council's representatives on Ermine Street Housing Limited had been present for the discussion, Councillor Edwards acknowledged that whilst the Councillors concerned had not been obliged to declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting under the Members' Code of Conduct, it had been their wish to do so.

Councillor Edwards proposed the recommendations from his Portfolio holder meeting held on 22 August 2017 that the Council:-

“Increase the maximum investment limit from the Council’s cash reserve with Ermine Street Housing from £35 million to £45 million while retaining the maximum investment with Ermine Street at 60% of the Council’s total investment portfolio.”

Councillor Lynda Harford, Portfolio Holder for Housing, seconded the proposition.

During discussion:-

- Councillor John Williams commented that the report before Council was dated 22 August 2017 and that the figures dated back to 31 March 2017. He noted that the report indicated the expectation that the investment would reach £35 million by this quarter but that there was no confirmation within the report that this had happened. He therefore felt that the Council was being asked to make a decision based on out of date information and suggested that it would have been helpful to have been presented with the up to date figures.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins queried the valuation of the current assets of Ermine Street’s Property portfolio and other non-current assets which was indicated in the report at £24.7 million and suggested that further clarity and details were required around the valuation of the assets. She was also concerned that the report did not indicate the level of interest received in respect of the investment and expressed the view that the Council needed all relevant information in order to make an informed judgment.
- Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer referred to the indication in paragraph 14 of the report that there was a minimal level of risk but was of the view that the information provided on the valuation of the assets did not enable Members properly to evaluate the risk.
- Councillor Bridget Smith expressed the view that a significant increase in house building in the District might be likely to result in a decline in the value of house prices and consequently in the value of the capital assets of Ermine Street Housing. There was also a concern that if there was a requirement to dispose of the assets of Ermine Street Housing, the Council might not be able to recoup its investments.
- Councillor Tony Orgee did not consider that increased house building would necessarily reduce house prices, citing the local experience with building on the fringes of Cambridge where house prices had increased rather than decreased.
- Councillor Lynda Harford supported the proposal commenting that the Council had a record of prudential investment and treasury management and emphasising that the proposal was intended to maximise flexibility.

Responding to the comments during the debate, Councillor Edwards:-

- Commented that it was important to be mindful of whether investment in Ermine Street Housing should be by way of borrowing or investment from the Council’s own resources.
- Noted that whilst the report before the Council was from 22 August 2017, more up to date information regarding investments with Ermine Street Housing was

available in the reports considered at his Portfolio Holder's meeting on 21 November 2017.

- Reported that details regarding rates of returns on investment were contained in the confidential appendix submitted to his Portfolio Holder's meeting.
- Reminded Members that there was a Service risk register and an Ermine Street Housing risk register.
- Commented that the proposal, if approved, would provide useful income to support services needed by the District's residents.

A vote was taken and votes were cast as follows:-

### **In favour (33)**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Ruth Betson, Francis Burkitt, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Peter Topping, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

### **Against (13)**

Councillors John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Doug Cattermole, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Ingrid Tregoin, Aiden Van de Weyer and John Williams.

### **Abstain (1)**

Councillor Douglas de Lacey.

(Note: Councillors Andrew Fraser and Richard Turner, having each declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest at Minute 2 above, withdrew from the meeting during discussion and voting on the above item)

Therefore the Council:

**RESOLVED** That the maximum investment limit from the Council's cash reserves with Ermine Street Housing be increased from £35 million to £45 million while retaining the maximum investment with Ermine Street at 60% of the Council's total investment portfolio.

## **8 (b) Community Governance Review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne Parishes (Civic Affairs Committee, 28 September)**

Councillor David McCraith, Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, presented a report which invited the Council to consider the recommendation of the Committee at its meeting held on 28 September regarding the Community Governance Review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne Parishes.

Councillor McCraith reminded the Council that the review had been requested by Cambourne Parish Council but also had the support of Caxton Parish Council and Elsworth Parish Council. The review had been undertaken because the housing

development at Cambourne West would alter the geographical spread of housing across the parishes and the resulting spatial separation between the two population centres in Caxton would no longer correspond to a parish boundary that reflected a coherent natural settlement pattern. The new development would be more closely aligned to the parish of Cambourne. A small strip of land to the south of the A428 was also currently in Elsworth parish but detached from the main population centre.

Councillor McCraith accordingly moved the first of the recommendations of the Civic Affairs Committee as follows:-

“To change the boundary as per Cambourne Parish Council’s proposed boundary (Appendix B)”.

Councillor Charles Nightingale seconded the proposition.

During discussion:-

- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley indicated his support for the proposal but asked that the opportunity also be taken to consider the parishing of West Cambourne. He commented that the development would give rise to issues which were particular to that settlement and that if West Cambourne had its own parish, it would be better placed to deal with its own local concerns.
- Councillor Ruth Betson commented that Cambourne Parish Council had been involved in discussions with the developers of West Cambourne and was prepared for the development. She noted that the number of parish councillors would increase from 13 to 19 with effect from May 2018 to reflect the growth of Cambourne. Additionally she referred to the implications for precepts if the parish boundaries were not amended.
- Councillor Douglas de Lacey sought an assurance that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England would not seek to make additional changes above and beyond those requested by the Council.
- Councillor Nick Wright reported that he had not detected an appetite to have Cambourne divided for parish purposes. He believed that Cambourne Parish Council was well placed to take on the additional West Cambourne development.
- Councillor Des O’Brien advised that he had been in touch with Caxton Parish Council which was supportive of the change proposed. He did not consider that a separate parish was required for West Cambourne but felt that residents of West Cambourne should be encouraged to stand for election on Cambourne Parish Council.
- In response to a request for clarification regarding the proposed revisions to the boundaries, the Chairman referred to Appendix B to the report which set out the proposed changes to the parish boundaries.

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

**In favour (48)**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Francis Burkitt, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa

Corney, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Des O'Brien, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon, Nick Wright.

**Against (0)**

**Abstain (2)**

Councillors Anna Bradnam and Ingrid Tregoing.

The Council accordingly:

**RESOLVED:** To change the boundary as per Cambourne Parish Council's proposed boundary (Appendix B to the report now circulated).

Councillor McCraith then moved the second of the recommendations from the meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on 28 September 2017 as follows:-

“To make a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries.”

Councillor Charles Nightingale seconded the proposition.

Councillor Douglas de Lacey repeated his question asked under the earlier recommendation as to the scope for the LGBCE to seek to make additional adjustments above and beyond those proposed by the Council. In response, the Chief Executive noted that the Electoral Services Manager had contacted the LGBCE who had indicated that, whilst they could not guarantee not proposing further changes, they had never previously triggered a further boundary review when considering similar such requests.

Upon being put to the vote the proposal was approved by affirmation.

The Council:

**RESOLVED** To make a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries.

**8 (c) Electoral Arrangements - South Trumpington**

Councillor David McCraith, Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, presented a report which invited the Council to consider the recommendation of the Committee, at its meeting held on 28 September 2017, regarding a proposal to request the LGBCE to re-align the County Boundaries along the newly defined parish boundary for Grantchester. No electors had been affected by this decision and it was being brought to the Council now so that a decision could be made alongside Cambourne West.

Councillor McCraith accordingly moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on 28 September 2017:-

“To make a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to re-align the County Council boundary along the new parish boundaries.”

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Charles Nightingale.

There was no discussion and upon being put to the vote, the proposal was approved by affirmation.

**RESOLVED:** To make a request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to re-align the County Council boundary along the new parish boundaries.

## 9. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Council noted reports prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority summarising the work of the Authority during October. Comments were received from the Council's representatives on the Combined Authority and its committees as summarised below:

- Councillor Andrew Fraser, a member of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, reported that the Committee was still finding its feet.
- Councillor Alex Riley, a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, referred to initial scepticism about the establishment of the Combined Authority, but commented upon the positive incentives such as the opportunity for the Combined Authority to bid for Government funding for major infrastructure and housing projects.
- Councillor John Batchelor, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, observed that consideration was being given to producing more accessible and informative newsletters highlighting the work of the committee. He also referred to timing issues with the gap between meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Combined Authority Board. Councillor Batchelor referred to developments relating to the Greater Cambridge/Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and indicated that he would welcome an update thereon from the Leader of the Council.
- Councillor Peter Topping, the Council's representative on the Combined Authority, provided further background and context on the Combined Authority's bid for Government funding to regenerate the brownfield site around Cambridge North Railway Station which currently housed the Anglian Water Wastewater facility.

During general discussion:

- Councillor Philippa Hart responded to earlier comments regarding scepticism about the Combined Authority. Additionally, she indicated that she would also welcome an update from the Leader on the position with the LEP
- Referring to previous comments about relocation of the Anglian Water treatment site, Councillor Anna Bradnam reported that residents in Milton had worked hard with Anglian Water in liaison meetings to address odour issues associated with the site. She also suggested that assumptions should not be made about

regeneration of the site in advance of the funding bid being agreed.

- Councillor Topping provided an update on the current position with the LEP, noting that Martin Whiteley, the Chief Executive of the Combined Authority, had now been appointed as the Interim Chief Executive of the LEP, alongside his current role.

## 10. FEEDBACK FROM "LET'S TALK" 2017

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Business and Customer Services and Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced a report providing an update on feedback from the "Let's Talk" listening and engagement exercise which was intended to help inform the development of a refreshed Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2022.

Consultation had taken place between July and September 2017. A number of engagement events had been held and had included a sample of six villages of varying sizes and varying amounts of growth. The face-to-face events had been supplemented by a web based survey, posts on social media, articles in the residents' magazine and by running a focus group.

Councillor Wright drew attention to the key issues highlighted by residents as important to them, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

During discussion:-

- Councillor John Williams queried whether professional advice had been sought in designing the survey, noting that a number of open questions appeared to have been used.
- Councillor Philippa Hart expressed reservations about the survey and sought clarification as to what had been learned from the consultation exercise.
- Councillor Bridget Smith commented that residents had been asked what they liked about living in South Cambridgeshire, but did not appear to have been asked about what they did not like. She also referred to the apparent contradictions in some of the responses highlighted in paragraph 10.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley expressed concerns about the validity of the results and whether they should be used to inform the Corporate Plan. In particular, he noted from the report that the exercise had not reached residents from non-white British communities or those with disabilities.

Responding to the comments raised, Councillor Wright:-

- Confirmed that professional advice had been taken and followed in designing the engagement exercise.
- Advised that the "Let's Talk" engagement had followed the usual procedures adopted by the Council when undertaking consultation exercises. It had however been extended to offer more face-to-face opportunities to capture feedback. He thanked the staff for their efforts in attending and facilitating the events held.

During further debate:

- Councillor Tumi Hawkins indicated that she was keen to understand the criteria used in selecting the communities chosen for the face-to-face events.
- Councillor Douglas de Lacey commented that the Council had missed the opportunity to focus on areas with which residents were dissatisfied so that it could seek to address those areas. Noting that cycle paths had been identified in responses to all three questions listed in Appendix A, he reported that he had lobbied for the adoption in Cambridgeshire of “Operation Close Pass” and asked that the Leader of the Council raise the issue of safety of cyclists at any future meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Councillor Anna Bradnam supported the view that the engagement exercise should have sought residents’ views on areas with which they were dissatisfied and where improvements were needed. She also commented that the design of survey questions could influence the outcome of the results. However, based on the results presented it appeared that improving road safety and tackling congestion were key issues to be addressed.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts felt that the survey contained “leading questions”. With reference to the question “How can we preserve and enhance what is important to you whilst the district is changing?” she also highlighted the apparent conflict in seeking to preserve and enhance communities having regard to the significant scale of growth facing the District.

In closing the discussion, Councillor Nick Wright commented on the intention that there would be an annual consultation exercise and indicated that the comments from Members had been noted and would be taken on board for the following year’s exercise.

## 11. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

### 11 (a) Question from Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer to the Portfolio Holder for Housing

*What contact has this Council had with the County Council’s Area Community Champion for our district?*

Councillor Lynda Harford, Portfolio Holder for Housing, advised that the role had been created by the County Council’s Communities and Partnership Committee. The scope of the Area Champion role had been agreed by the Committee in August 2017 and Councillor Lina Joseph had been appointed as the Area Champion for South Cambridgeshire.

Cllr Joseph had attended the South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Board meeting on 16 November as the new County Council Board Member. Informally, Cllr Joseph had also been welcomed at the Chairman’s Reception at Wimpole Hall.

A formal introductory meeting had been arranged on 15 December 2017 between Councillor Sue Ellington and the County Council’s Area Community Champion, together with South Cambridgeshire District and County Officers. Councillor Ellington would lead this meeting for the Council as her Portfolio most closely covered the remit of the County’s Area Community Champions.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Van de Weyer asked whether the Portfolio Holder considered the role of Area Community Champion to be good value for money.

In response, Councillor Harford reiterated that this was a County Council appointment but that the District Council would seek to work with the Area Community Champion to secure the best benefit for the Council and its residents.

**11(b) Question from Councillor Tumi Hawkins to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing**

*What implications do the measures proposed in the Autumn Budget have for the investment strategy of Ermine Street Housing?*

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, reported that, thus far, it did not appear that the Budget had any impact on the investment strategy of Ermine Street Housing.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hawkins asked about the impact of the removal of Stamp Duty for first time buyers of homes below £300,000. Councillor Edwards acknowledged that this might place Ermine Street Housing into a competitive position and that the implications would need to be considered by the Ermine Street Housing Board. It was anticipated that Ermine Street Housing would wish to consider the scope for developing new build schemes should opportunities arise.

**11(c) Question from Councillor Bridget Smith to the Leader of the Council**

*It is now 12 months since this Council hosted an LGA Peer Review. When may we expect a report on progress against the resultant Action Plan and when is the follow up visit from the Peer Review Panel to take place?*

Councillor Topping, Leader of the Council, responded by referring to the experienced group of Councillors and Officers who had carried out the peer review of the District Council. The Council had received a clean bill of health reflecting the hard work of the Council, most notably from the former Leader, Councillor Manning.

A number of actions and responses to these recommendations were well underway. Currently these included the establishment of member led task & finish groups. One had focussed on considering the key economic growth and housing issues for the District and how to assist in the development of a refreshed economic growth strategy. A second was identifying how the democratic element of the Council could operate effectively as the number of Members was reduced from 57 to 45. Members had been very engaged in this process making positive contributions, and these groups would report their recommendations.

With regard to more internally focussed recommendations, work was underway to develop a commercialisation strategy as the Council built its 'next steps' programme, this would include a series of options for investment and income generation to maintain service delivery against a reducing revenue support grant.

Councillor Topping indicated that an update would be presented to the Cabinet.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Smith asked what action was being taken to follow up the recommendations with regard to reviewing overview and scrutiny arrangements to reflect best practice and provision of training for overview and scrutiny members.

In response, Councillor Topping indicated his recollection that the views expressed on overview and scrutiny best practice did not necessarily correspond with the Peer Review

conclusions. He suggested that the recommendations from the Peer Review could perhaps be a matter for consideration by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee itself. In respect of the question as to when the follow up Peer Review visit was expected to take place, Councillor Topping noted that the Peer Review team had to visit the City Council before returning to South Cambridgeshire.

**11(d) Question from Councillor Bridget Smith to the Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee**

*When might this Council expect the Partnerships Review Committee to scrutinise the rebranded Greater Cambridge Partnership?*

The Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee indicated that the Committee reviewed its forward plan at each meeting and that this presented the opportunity for issues to be scheduled for review. The Committee could be invited to consider whether to scrutinise the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and to question the Council's representatives on the GCP at a future meeting.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Smith asked how many times the Partnerships Review Committee had scrutinised the GCP and what recommendations had emerged from that scrutiny process.

Councillor Topping, in response, highlighted the excellent and detailed piece of work just completed by the Partnerships Review Committee on the "Mind the Gap" review with regard to children and adolescent mental health services and indicated that the Committee might now be in a position to take on its next piece of work.

**11(e) Question from Councillor Janet Lockwood to the Leader**

*Does the Leader believe that this Council's scrutiny of the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership (GCP) is sufficient to ensure that it acts to the benefit of the residents of South Cambridgeshire?*

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, firstly reminded the Council that a number of South Cambridgeshire Councillors were involved in the GCP. He indicated that the structures of the Greater Cambridge Partnership had been refreshed earlier in the year to ensure the Partnership was open, transparent and that all Members involved could influence and scrutinise policy development through the creation of Task & Finish Working Groups. This was in addition to the Assembly (which saw and commented on all papers) and the Board. South Cambridgeshire District Councillors from all parties were actively involved in the Greater Cambridge Partnership on those working groups and in the Assembly and Board as mentioned previously

Councillor Topping indicated that it was a matter for the Partnerships Review Committee to determine its own work programme.

Councillor Lockwood, by way of a supplementary question, and whilst acknowledging that the Assembly provided the mechanism for pre-scrutiny of GCP Board decisions, asked whether the Leader was content that the decisions of the GCP Board were not currently subject to post-decision scrutiny. Councillor Topping indicated that he was content with the work of the GCP.

**11(f) Question from Councillor John Williams to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

*If you look in the Autumn issue of the South Cambs Magazine (page 24) you will see that a number of our villages have only one green bin collection in November (for example Fulbourn) and no collection in December (for example Bar Hill) and also many villages have only one blue bin collection in December (for example Cambourne); who authorised this major departure from kerb-side waste collection policy?*

Councillor Williams prefaced his question by noting that a few additional bin collections had been added in during the lead up to Christmas.

Councillor Howell, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, responded that there had been no change to the kerb-side waste collection policy and residents in all villages continued to receive an excellent waste collection service. Over 2 million bins had been due to be collected in the last quarter, with 99.55% collected on the due day, which was above target.

The detailed issue that Councillor Williams had raised was just a quirk of dates, the result of where Christmas week fell in the bin collection cycle this year and how the annual move to monthly green bin collections had been accommodated. Councillor Howell noted that technically, Cllr Williams' residents had received 3 green collections in October this year, simply because the last collection date had been 30 October. As a result, some villages had moved to monthly green bin collections in the last week of November, while some had started in the first week of December. This meant that many villages would return to fortnightly green collections a bit earlier than usual in February 2018. Therefore the issue was simply a quirk of dates.

Councillor Williams cited a number of missed bin collections in Fulbourn and referring to an undertaking given by the previous Portfolio Holder that the shared bin collection service would be the same or better than the previous service, asked, as a supplementary question, when that commitment would be met. Councillor Howell, in response, reported that over the period operated by the shared service 370,488 bins had been collected and 244 bins had been missed. This represented a 99.55% bin collection rate and was above target. The Portfolio Holder was therefore satisfied that this represented a good bin collection service.

**11(g) Question from Councillor de Lacey to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Customer Services**

*Could the relevant Portfolio Holder explain why the scamb.gov.uk mail domain is currently (evening of 09.11.2017) included in the Internet spam blacklists because it is transmitting spam which appears to come from [personal email address redacted] but is being routed through our mail servers?*

*This means that ISPs which use the URIBL blacklists appear to be blocking all mail from our domain.*

Councillor Nick Wright, Portfolio Holder for Business and Customer Services and Deputy Leader, thanked Councillor de Lacey for raising this technical issue which had provided him with the chance to raise a more general but very important issue with all Councillors.

This technical issue had now been resolved. It had been due to a Councillor's personal e-mail account, which was not run or protected by the Council's 3C ICT Service, being corrupted. This had been picked-up by the Council's ICT security software which had led to the access issues identified. This highlighted why Members' personal e-mail use should be discouraged for business purposes. Councillor Wright therefore asked all Councillors to use their official Council e-mail account for all Council business.

Councillor de Lacey noted that he had that afternoon had a message from a gov.uk email address blocked. By way of a supplementary question he asked why the 3C servers blocked emails from an official gov.uk email address but allowed spam through. In particular he wished to know what criteria were used to block emails and commented on the current level of service

Councillor Wright indicated that he would provide a written response to Councillor de Lacey in relation to this technical question. He further reported that he had confidence in the service levels provided by the 3C ICT service and which were improving all the time. Further reports on the 3C service would be reported through his future Portfolio meetings.

#### **11(h) Question from Councillor Philippa Hart to the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

*Concern has been expressed by parish councils in our district that their right to request a planning application be considered by planning committee is frequently failing to be acceded to by the Chair of Planning Committee's delegation panel.*

*Please can the Planning Portfolio Holder tell Council what percentage of such requests have passed the delegation panel and been considered by Planning Committee in the past one year period?*

Councillor Robert Turner, the Portfolio Holder for Planning, reported that over the last twelve months (until mid Nov 17) 147 applications had been considered by the Chairman for decision by Planning Committee and 8 applications had been referred to committee. (5%)

The Portfolio Holder noted that Parish Councils did not request referrals to Planning Committee lightly, however of 147 requests made for applications to go the Planning Committee:

- 112 had been minor applications (the vast majority for single plots);
- 47 had been for household development (e.g. garages/ extensions);
- 1 had been for an advert;
- 1 had been a discharge of condition; and
- 6 had been for major applications.

Where cases were not taken to Planning Committee, officers did write to Parish Councils to explain why.

The reason for review of the Scheme of Delegation had been because the agendas were becoming increasingly long and regularly included matters of a minor nature. The number of planning applications received by the Council remained high, as did the nature and complexity of planning proposals. The aim of the changes to the Scheme of Delegation was to ensure that the Planning Committee considered either the more significant major applications or the more controversial ones. The changes to the Scheme of Delegation had been introduced in May 2016. It followed on from discussions and workshops and consultation with both Members and Parish Councils. At that stage there had been an undertaking to do a formal review of the process within two years and this remained on programme.

Councillor Hart expressed her concern that only 5% of requests from Parish Councils had been referred to the Planning Committee and, by way of a supplementary question, asked whether it was proposed to revisit the way in which such requests were considered and determined. The Portfolio Holder for Planning reported that it was

proposed to review the Scheme of Delegation in the new year. He re-iterated however that the vast majority of requests from Parish Councils related to matters of a minor nature. He also commented that 90% of applications were determined by Officers under delegated powers.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for a short break at 4.00pm. The meeting resumed at 4.15pm.

## **13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **13 (a) Motion from Councillor Bridget Smith**

Councillor Bridget Smith moved the following motion as set out on the agenda:-

“Members are currently being asked by the Independent Remuneration Panel to complete a questionnaire which includes questions about the appropriateness of portfolio holders’ remuneration. It is extremely difficult to make a judgement about this when 2 cabinet members fail to ever hold portfolio holder meetings and the remainder have held between 1 and 8 meetings in the past year. Since all portfolios, apart from Councillor Burkitt’s, are responsible for substantial budgets this begs serious questions about the transparency of decision making as well as the amount of work involved in each area of responsibility. This Council agrees that all budget holding portfolio holders should hold at least 3 public portfolio meetings per calendar year”.

In moving her motion, Councillor Smith elaborated on the number of meetings held by individual portfolio holders, noting that 2 cabinet members had not held any meetings, and gave an indication of the approximate cost per meeting based on the total cost of special responsibility allowances for portfolio holders. She expressed the view that if there was no business to transact, briefings could be provided in order to promote transparency about the work of the portfolio holder.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer.

Councillor Tony Orgee proposed an amendment to retain just the final sentence of the motion and to delete the words “at least 3” and to insert “as appropriate” at the end of that sentence.

Upon a challenge on a point of order, the Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that he did not believe the amendment negated the original motion and the Chairman accordingly ruled the amendment to be in order.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Ray Manning.

Speaking in support of his amendment, Councillor Orgee argued that there was little point in holding meetings for no purpose, hence the amendment provided for such meetings to be held “as appropriate”. He did however advocate that where portfolio holders did not hold meetings, in order to promote transparency, they should report to Council on why it had not been necessary to do so.

A challenge was raised, on a point of order, that Councillor Orgee’s amendment did not include reference to a requirement for portfolio holders to report to Council when no meetings had been held.

Councillor Hazel Smith proposed a further amendment to include the additional words indicated by Councillor Orgee. Councillor Orgee agreed to incorporate the revised wording within his amendment.

At the request of the Chairman, for the purposes of clarity, Councillor Orgee submitted the revised wording in writing, as follows:

“This Council agrees that all budget holding portfolio holders should hold public portfolio meetings per calendar year as appropriate.

In the event of no such meetings being held by a portfolio holder, the portfolio holder makes a report to full Council why no such meeting has been held.”

The revised wording was displayed at the meeting for the benefit of the Council.

During discussion upon the amendment:-

- Councillor Philippa Hart expressed concern at the inclusion of the words “as appropriate” in the amendment.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins felt that a minimum number of meetings should be prescribed in order that portfolio holders could be held to account.
- Councillor Nick Wright commented that most reports went straight to Cabinet and that all Councillors had the opportunity to make an input at those meetings. Individual portfolio holder meetings were held but, with the exception of those of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, tended to not be well attended by other Members.
- Councillor Tim Wotherspoon reported that he had tended to bring items direct to Cabinet meetings which were better attended by Members and the public. However he welcomed the opportunity to report on an annual basis to Council.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley noted that Members had many conflicting demands on their time and it was not always possible to attend every meeting, however he believed that the key point of principle was that decisions should be taken in an open and transparent way and that portfolio holders should hold meetings in order to promote such transparency and awareness of the work of their portfolio.
- Councillor Robert Turner, the Portfolio Holder for Planning, wished to thank those Members who had attended his portfolio holder meetings. He had requested that further dates be added for his portfolio meetings and noted that the next meeting would take place on 11 December 2017.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts spoke against the amendment and suggested that if there was insufficient business to merit calling portfolio holder meetings, consideration should perhaps be given to reducing the number of portfolios.

Councillor Orgee requested that the amendment be further altered by deletion of the word “makes” in the second sentence and its replacement by the words “will make”. Additionally, following a suggestion, Councillor Orgee agreed to alter the motion further to delete the word “calendar” in the first sentence and to replace it by “municipal”. The

meeting's consent to the alterations was indicated without discussion.

The Chairman accordingly invited the Council to vote upon the amendment as follows:-

"This Council agrees that all budget holding portfolio holders should hold public portfolio meetings per municipal year as appropriate.

In the event of no such meetings being held by a portfolio holder, the portfolio holder will make a report to full Council why no such meeting has been held."

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

**In favour (29)**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Ruth Betson, Francis Burkitt, 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, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

**Against (13)**

Councillors John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Doug Cattermole, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Aiden Van de Weyer and John Williams.

**Abstain (0)**

The amendment was accordingly carried.

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

**In favour (30)**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Ruth Betson, Francis Burkitt, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Andrew Fraser, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Mark Howell, Douglas de Lacey, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

**Against (11)**

Councillors John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Janet Lockwood, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Aiden Van de Weyer and John Williams.

**Abstain (0)**

Therefore the Council:

**RESOLVED:** This Council agrees that all budget holding portfolio holders should hold public portfolio meetings per municipal year as appropriate.

In the event of no such meetings being held by a portfolio holder, the portfolio holder will make a report to full Council why no such meeting has been held.

### **13(b) SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer moved the following motion:-

“That Standing Order 12.1 (a) be suspended, in accordance with Standing Order 22.1, to permit a further motion to be debated at the meeting.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sebastian Kindersley.

Upon being put to the vote, the Council unanimously:

**RESOLVED:** That Standing Order 12.1 (a) be suspended, in accordance with Standing Order 22.1, to permit a further motion to be debated at the meeting.

### **13(c) MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR VAN DE WEYER**

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer moved the following motion:

“Following a reprimand of this Council by the Local Plan Inspectors, this Council apologises on behalf of the Leader, for inter alia, jumping to conclusions and requests that the Chief Executive convey our apology to the Inspectors.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sebastian Kindersley.

In moving the motion, Councillor Van de Weyer commented that an email from the Leader had been sent to Members and parishes; that a press release had been issued with regard to the Local Plan status and that email exchanges with the Inspector had been published on the Council’s website. He further referred to a letter which had been received from the Planning Inspector expressing concern about the email and the publication of email exchanges. Councillor Van de Weyer noted that, to date, an apology from the Joint Director of Planning had been sent to the Planning Inspector but expressed the view that the Leader should write to all Parish Councils to apologise and to clarify the position.

During discussion upon the motion:-

- Councillor Bridget Smith observed that the Council had a communications strategy and questioned why the communication had been sent from the Leader. With respect to the Planning Inspector’s letter, she commented on the potential damage to the Council’s relationship with the Planning Inspector. Noting that the response to the Planning Inspector had been sent by officers, she was of the view that that an apology should be sent from the Leader.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts was concerned at the nature of the communication sent out to parishes. With reference to the current position with the Local Plan, she expressed the view that the communication may have raised unrealistic hopes amongst parish councils.
- Councillor Tumi Hawkins felt that the communication had contained

inaccurate information and was of the opinion that the Leader should write to parish councils with an apology.

- Councillor Douglas de Lacey commented on potential implications in terms of speculative applications.
- Councillor Philippa Hart commented on a communication issued regarding rural travel hubs which she felt was inaccurate insofar as the reference to a parish in her ward was concerned.
- Councillor Nick Wright disagreed with earlier comments. He noted that the Council had immediately published the Inspector's letter on the website and that a joint response had been sent from the District and City Councils. Councillor Wright believed that the communication had been issued with the best of intentions to keep parishes informed about the position with the Local Plan.
- The Leader of the Council indicated that he did not wish to add significantly to the statement he had made at the beginning of the meeting. He reminded the Council that the South Cambridgeshire draft Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 28 March 2014 and noted that information relating to the Local Plan, including correspondence with the Inspector, had been published on the Council's website and was therefore available for the public to view.
- Councillor Sebastian Kindersley expressed concerns about the communication and noting that the response to the Inspector had been sent by officers, was of the opinion that an apology should be sent from the Leader.

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

#### **In favour (13)**

Councillors John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Doug Cattermole, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Sebastian Kindersley, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Aiden Van de Weyer and John Williams.

#### **Against (29)**

Councillors David Bard, Val Barrett, Ruth Betson, Francis Burkitt, 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, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Tim Scott, Peter Topping, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright.

#### **Abstain (0)**

The motion was therefore declared lost.

## **14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

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**The Meeting ended at 5.45pm**

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