

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 28 November 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

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

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

<b>Officers:</b>	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Susan Gardner-Craig	Interim Director of Corporate Services
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Philip Allen, Nigel Cathcart, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Gavin Clayton, Peter Fane, Philippa Hart and Tony Mason.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman referred to the email sent from Democratic Services to request that each Member review his/her Register of Interests form to ensure that it was up to date prior to the commencement of the audit of the Statement of Accounts. He accordingly requested that Members inform Democratic Services of any changes to their registered interests as soon as possible.

### **4. MINUTES**

With reference to Minute 11(d), Councillor Nick Wright queried the response given by the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning in relation to appeals officer capacity as it appeared to have been contradicted by a response given by an officer at a meeting of the Planning Committee. The Chairman ruled that this challenge did not relate to the accuracy of the minutes before the Council.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of the Council:-

- (a) was pleased to report that Councillor Bill Handley had been appointed as Chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP);
- (b) reported that she had requested Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn to lead preparations for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2020; and
- (c) noted that she had been privileged to attend the launch of the Cambridge Zero initiative at the University of Cambridge.

## 6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

### 6 (a) From Sue Bell

Sue Bell asked the following question:

I am a private individual with concerns about residential garden development.

When the new Local Plan was adopted by the Council in September last year, it was my understanding that planning applications in the local area would now be judged against the process contained in the newly adopted Plan:

Policy H/16 (NH/2:) – Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which it is located. H/16 also states – Residential gardens will only be used for the development of new buildings where there would be no significant harm to the local area, taking into consideration the character of the area, residential amenity, vehicular safety etc.

This standard of “no significant harm” is not applied by any other policy and yet the Council routinely ignores policy H/16 when making decisions on the development of residential gardens.

Does the Portfolio Holder for Planning agree that when making these decisions, the Council should take into account all relevant policies of the Local Plan, or is it acceptable for the Council to continue to ignore policy H/16 when it comes to the development of residential gardens?

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of the Council, thanked Ms Bell for attending the meeting and asking her question. The Leader acknowledged that there was a difficult balance to be struck between delivering the housing the Council was required to provide and other factors, such as those mentioned in the question. The Local Planning Authority was required to determine applications in accordance with its Local Plan. This often required a balance to be struck between high level policy objectives and specific policy provisions. The Council was under pressure to deliver new homes, not just on big strategic sites but also in villages, to provide appropriate high quality accommodation for young people and elderly people so that they were able to continue to live in their own villages. Policy H/16 had been subject to scrutiny and examination at inquiry stage and the wording would be reviewed as part of the Joint Local Plan review now underway. In

the meantime, the Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to strive to achieve high quality housing on large and small sites across the District to help meet housing needs across the community.

Ms Bell advised that she did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

**6 (b) From Colin Wilson**

Mr Colin Wilson asked the following question:

The percentage of formal complaints resolved within the allotted timescale has been identified by the council as one of its key performance indicators. The council's most recent performance report, dated 14 November, shows that this key indicator has been consistently and significantly below the accepted target since June 2018, and no data at all has been reported for this indicator since June 2019.

Will the Deputy Leader (Cllr Gough) please explain why there has been no improvement in this indicator since June 2018, why no recent data has been reported for this indicator, and what steps the cabinet will take to see that the reasons for the poor performance in this area are addressed?

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of the Council, commented that all elements of customer service were a priority for the Council, but acknowledged that this was "work in progress" and that the Council was striving to improve its performance in this area. She was particularly mindful that not dealing with complaints efficiently resulted in more work, cost and frustration for all parties involved. The Leader highlighted improvements already achieved in performance, noting that in quarter 2, 81% of complaints received had been responded to within the target timescales. Work was also underway to improve processes, including training staff and enabling residents to submit complaints and feedback using the MySouthCambs customer portal, which would be completed soon. The Leader observed that some complaints were complex and involved more than one service area and stressed that it was important that complaints were dealt with properly, as well as within the requisite timescales. She was hopeful that it would be possible to report significant improvements in performance relating to the management of complaints within the next six months.

Mr Wilson indicated that he did not wish to ask a supplementary question but would raise the issue again in six months if performance had not improved.

**6 (c) From David Brown**

Mr David Brown asked the following question:

I worked for the Harlow District/Borough Council for 23 years, and we were always told that if we witnessed any theft, fraud or corruption, we should report it to the relevant manager and the proper legal authorities and that we could do so without fear of reprisal. I was shocked to recently read in the South Cambridgeshire District Council Anti-Theft, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy (in paragraph 5.3) that employees who witness theft, fraud or corruption are prohibited from reporting these crimes directly to the police.

Does the Leader of the Council support the current policy or will she commit to changing the policy so that employees who have concerns about theft, fraud or corruption will be

able to contact the police freely without fear of reprisals?

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of the Council, thanked Mr Brown for his question. She noted that the Anti-Theft, Fraud and Corruption Policy needed to be read alongside the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which provided the process for reporting concerns. Reporting concerns internally was encouraged as it was the most effective route for establishing the appropriate response. However, the Whistleblowing Policy stated that concerns could be reported irrespective of seniority or status and without fear of intimidation, victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or some other reprisal. Paragraph 5.3 of the Anti-Theft, Fraud and Corruption Policy was not intended to prohibit staff from contacting the police and paragraph 11 of the Whistleblowing Policy set out multiple reporting channels where an individual felt it was right to take the matter outside the Council. The Council's Constitution Review Task and Finish Group had recommended that the Anti-Theft, Fraud and Corruption Policy should be reviewed by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee which would provide an opportunity to refresh both documents and highlight the ambiguity identified. The Leader indicated that the results of the review would be shared with Mr Brown.

Mr Brown noted that the Constitution Review Task and Finish Group had recommended to the Civic Affairs Committee that the Anti-Theft, Fraud and Corruption Policy should no longer form part of the Constitution and, as a supplementary question, asked if this sent the right signal to officers and members of the public?

The Leader of the Council indicated that she would need to reflect further on this. She noted that the aim was make the Constitution less unwieldy and more user friendly. However, the Civic Affairs Committee would no doubt wish to be assured that all appropriate protections for officers and means of reporting concerns would be maintained and to be satisfied that all appropriate documents continued to be included within the Constitution. She thanked Mr Brown for highlighting this issue. The Chairman referred to his understanding that it was intended that some sections which currently formed part of the Constitution would be incorporated into new documents.

#### **6 (d) From Daniel Fulton**

Following a short introductory statement in which he commented on accountability within the Council, Mr Daniel Fulton asked the following question:-

This question is asked on behalf of the Fews Lane Consortium, a community action group based in Longstanton working to promote the principles of sustainable development and to advocate for accountability in local government.

Over the past year, the Consortium has been working with communities across the district that have been adversely affected by plainly unfair planning decisions taken by this council without regard for its own policies and without regard for basic standards of procedural fairness.

Time and time again, when responding to complaints from local residents, officers seem to have been instructed to concede nothing and to deny culpability at all costs and in all circumstances, even when the facts clearly and unambiguously point to mistakes having been made on the part of the council. It is as though officers feel that it is more important for them to protect the council from reputational damage than to actually address real instances of injustice resulting directly from unfair decisions made by this council.

In the council's recently adopted business plan, the council has pledged to be 'a modern and caring council' that puts its 'customers at the centre of everything we do'. What programmes or policies will the Leader of the Council commit to putting into place to see that these values and organisational objectives are reflected in the way in which officers carry out their day-to-day duties on behalf of the council?

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of the Council, indicated that she did not agree with the comments made by Mr Fulton in his introductory statement and that she was sorry that he believed that the Council had made '*plainly unfair planning decisions*'. She did not believe that to be the case. It was certainly not true that officers had been instructed to '*concede nothing and to deny culpability at all costs and in all circumstances*'. She indicated that what was true was that everyone made mistakes and the Council's complaints procedure was designed both to address possible mistakes, but also, importantly, to help it to learn from those mistakes. Alongside the Council's internal procedures were the external, independent review mechanisms of the Local Government Ombudsman and the judicial system, although it was preferable to be able to resolve issues without recourse to those external mechanisms.

Clearly, each planning application had a specific set of circumstances and not all people would agree with officer and committee decisions. Officers across the Council shared a commitment to ensuring transparent and good decision making. Within the shared planning service there was a comprehensive implementation and change programme underway to ensure that improvements were made, where needed. The Leader indicated that she was fully supportive of this process and of the staff who were working hard to deliver for residents. Bringing two large and complex services together was never going to be an easy task, but she was confident that, while there was still some way to go, the Council was on the right track and was making solid progress.

Mr Fulton whilst not raising a supplementary question, indicated that he felt there was a disconnect between the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the Council and his experience as a resident of the District.

The Leader of the Council stated that she was sorry that Mr Fulton felt there to be a such a disconnect as he had outlined. She acknowledged that improvements were on-going in the planning service and hoped that in future he would experience those improvements. The Leader concluding by indicating that the Council valued the engagement of its residents and that Mr Fulton was welcome to come along to meetings and to put his questions directly to Members.

## 7. PETITIONS

The Chairman noted that one petition had been received, as set out on the agenda, which was related to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions, which was listed at item 8(f) on the agenda and he proposed that the petition should be dealt with in conjunction with that item of business.

Mr Tariq Ahmed, the lead petitioner, was present at the meeting and the Chairman therefore proposed:

"That the order of business be varied, in accordance with Standing Order 13(c), to enable item 8(f), the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions, to be dealt with as the next item of business".

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Deborah Roberts and agreed by Council by affirmation.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

### **8 (a) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions**

#### **(i) Petition**

The Chairman reminded Members that the Council would first deal with the petition submitted in relation to this item.

An electronic petition, with 164 e-signatures, had been received in the following terms:

“Taxi drivers reject company door sign mandatory by South Cambridgeshire District council”

A copy of the letter received with the petition and a link to the online petition had been circulated with the Council agenda.

The Chairman invited Mr Tariq Ahmed, representing the Cambridge Taxi Drivers’ Association, to present the petition.

Mr Ahmed made a number of points in support of the petition including:

- drivers felt that the requirement for company door signs favoured large taxi companies and was unfair on self-employed drivers and small companies as it restricted them from working for other companies;
- the need to change company signs on the car on busy roads gave rise to concerns for driver safety;
- having the company door sign permanently on the car made vehicles and drivers vulnerable to crime;
- drivers were losing customers and income;
- an article in the Cambridge Evening News had highlighted how the large taxi companies were threatening the livelihoods of drivers if they were found to be working for more than one firm; and
- drivers disputed that the requirement for company door signs increased public safety.

Councillor Bill Handley, the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing, responded to the petition. He thanked Mr Ahmed and his fellow driver colleagues for their engagement in the consultation process and for presenting the petition both at Council and at the Licensing Committee on 11 November 2019.

Councillor Handley explained that it was possible that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy might be deferred for further consultation; that the engagement of Mr Ahmed and other drivers in the further consultation process would be welcomed and that the comments in the petition would be noted in that process.

Councillor Handley accordingly proposed:

“That Members note the petition and give it due consideration when considering the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy”.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Anna Bradnam.

Council by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

That Members note the petition and give it due consideration when considering the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy.

**(ii) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions**

The Chairman reported that late correspondence had been received from a number of different parties concerning the new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy. It had not been possible in the limited time available to carry out the necessary due diligence and to give proper consideration to the points raised within the correspondence.

The Chairman stated that he was aware that there had been extensive consultation already on the policy but that it was important that the Council continued to listen carefully to new information and to allow time for potential further consultation, should that be required.

Accordingly, the Chairman proposed:

“That consideration of agenda Item 8 (f) (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions) be deferred to allow time for a further period of consultation and consideration as appropriate.”

Councillor Deborah Roberts seconded the motion.

In response to comments from Members:

(a) Councillor, Anna Bradnam, the Chairman of the Licensing Committee:

- Reported that the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, at its meeting on 19 November 2019, had made comments on the environmental and emissions related aspects of the policy and these had been included in the report circulated with the Council agenda, but confirmed that these comments had not been considered by the Licensing Committee.
- Confirmed that legal advice had been obtained and taken into account on the draft policy before Council and commented that further advice had been obtained in the light of the recent correspondence.

(b) The Chairman of the Council clarified that it was anticipated that the further consultation would be for a period of 6 weeks.

Council, by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

To defer consideration of agenda Item 8(f) (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Conditions) to allow for a further period of consultation and consideration, as appropriate.

## 8 (b) Investment Strategy

Councillor John Williams, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, proposed the recommendation of the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 2 October 2019, regarding the adoption of the Investment Strategy and consequent changes to the Scheme of Delegation. In moving the motion, Councillor John Williams thanked the officers involved in developing the updated strategy, noting that it had been subject to review by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy and was now considered to be an exemplar document.

Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the motion.

During discussion:

- Councillor Heather Williams indicated that she was not comfortable with the increased level of investment provided for in the strategy and questioned whether the Investment Strategy would continue to be unaffected by any interventions by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and HM Treasury relating to the scale of borrowing by local authorities for commercial purposes.
- Councillor Hazel Smith spoke in support of increasing investment as envisaged in the strategy, noting that local authorities needed to find new ways to deliver financial returns. She also commented that, in her opinion, the order of paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 should be reversed.
- Councillor Peter Topping referred to the amended governance arrangements and commended Councillor Heather Williams who had expressed caution about the arrangements for scrutinising and approving investments when the previous strategy had been submitted.
- Councillor Grenville Chamberlain reiterated the need for proper scrutiny of investment proposals, expressing concern that the Council would be locked into long term investments and that the risks needed to be properly understood.
- Councillor Bridget Smith emphasised that the strategy had been through robust review by CIPFA and commented that the Council would have a broad portfolio, with investments spread to minimise risks. Given the challenges facing the Council, including uncertainty around funding from central government, the Council needed to make investments to ensure it had capacity to deliver services.

In summing up, Councillor John Williams responded to Members' comments, particularly referring to the investment criteria matrix to be used to evaluate investment properties and the flowchart setting out the governance arrangements.

At the request of the Chairman, Councillor John Williams confirmed that he was content to accept the proposal of Councillor Hazel Smith to re-order paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 within the strategy.

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

### **In favour (26):**

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



**Against (10):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters and Heather Williams.

**Abstain (1):**

Councillor Nick Wright

Council

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve, subject to the re-ordering of paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3, the updated Investment Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report of the Interim Director of Finance, which includes:
  - (a) a range of investment indicators to comply with the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments; and
  - (b) the governance arrangements that enable the Council to seek approval for priority investments in a timely manner in response to market conditions.
2. To approve the consequent changes to the Scheme of Delegation to enable the Head of Commercial Development and Investment to progress investment opportunities, including due diligence checks, and to authorise the S151 Officer to submit non-binding offers in line with market practice.

**8 (c) General Fund Revenue and Capital Provisional Outturn 2018/19**

In introducing the recommendations of the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 2 October 2019, Councillor John Williams, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, drew attention to the following corrections needed to the report of the Head of Finance:

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| Page 69 | – | the figures set out in paragraph 22 should read “£28.054 million” and “£23.147 million”; and                     |
| Page 75 | – | the figures in the table were in thousands so the title of the second column should read “Rollover value £000s”. |

In moving the recommendations, Councillor John Williams highlighted the proposal to put £6 million into reserves. Normally growth in income would be factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) but in view of the complexities in forecasting growth income and the current challenges associated with local government finance, it was prudent to take this sum as a “windfall” and to retain it within the Council’s reserves.

Councillor Neil Gough seconded the motion.

During discussion:-

- Councillor Heather Williams asked if the grant for Village Design was time limited and also questioned the reason for the rollover of the provision for the Local Plan.
- Councillors Peter Topping, Tom Bygott and Deborah Roberts expressed concerns about the proposal to place £3 million in a Transformation Reserve and questioned what the benefits would be for the Council’s residents.
- Councillor Neil Gough emphasised the uncertainties facing local government

finance and commented on the need for the Council to embark on a programme of transformation, including digital transformation and commercialisation, to ensure that the organisation was equipped to face the future.

Councillor John Williams responded to Members' questions and in particular:

- Indicated that he was not aware of any time constraint on the village design grant;
- Provided further detail on the need to appropriate the sum of £3 million to the Transformation Reserve in order to support the programme of transformation, business improvement, efficiency and commercialisation and to realise on-going savings.

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

**In favour (26):**

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

**Against (12):**

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

**Abstain (0):**

Council

**RESOLVED:**

To approve:

1. The re-designation of the established Business Efficiency Reserve as the Transformation Reserve and that the sum of £3 million be appropriated from the unallocated General Fund Reserve to the Transformation Reserve to enable the service transformation and organisational change programme to be resourced, noting that the General Fund unallocated reserve would then be £14.446 million.
2. The General Fund Revenue Budget Carry Forwards in the sum of £1.227 million, as outlined in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance.
3. The General Fund Capital Budget carry forwards of £6.464 million due mainly to the slippage of capital projects, as outlined in the report.

**8 (d) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Provisional Outturn 2018/19**

Councillor John Williams, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, moved and Councillor

Hazel Smith, the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, seconded the recommendations of the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 2 October 2019, in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Budget outturn.

In introducing the report, Councillor John Williams pointed out that the rollover figures on pages 83 and 85 were in £000s and he elaborated further on the key variances as outlined in the report.

Council, by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

To approve:

1. The Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget Carry Forwards from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 in the sum of £0.739 million, identified at Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance;
2. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Budget Carry Forwards from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 of £1.124 million, identified at Appendix B.

**8 (e) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

Councillor Douglas de Lacey, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, moved the recommendation of the committee, at its meeting held on 29 October 2019, regarding the schedule of polling districts and polling places. In introducing the item, Councillor de Lacey noted that the committee had expressed some concerns with regard to accessibility for visually impaired electors to the polling stations at the Cambourne Hub. He had asked the Electoral Services Manager to review this and had been assured that appropriate arrangements would be made to direct electors to the correct polling station.

Council, by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

To agree that the current schedule of polling districts and polling places be retained with no changes.

**8 (f) General Fund Capital Programme Update and New Bids**

Councillor John Williams, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, moved the recommendation of the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 6 November 2019, regarding the Capital Programme update and new bids. In so doing, he reported that the schedule of new bids included funding for two Business Plan priorities:

- (i) £545,000 in 2020/21 for essential investment in footpath lighting upgrades, given the level of need and energy consumption benefits; and
- (ii) £1.3 million for a range of energy efficiency and green energy measures at South Cambridgeshire Hall.

Money for both projects would come from the established Renewables Reserve. Councillor John Williams noted that responsibility for street lighting was complex and, therefore, he explained which authority was responsible for which category of street

lighting within the District. He additionally clarified that only footway lighting which was the responsibility of this Council or where the parish council paid for the electricity, would fall within the remit of this project.

Councillor Neil Gough seconded the motion.

During discussion:

- Councillor Nick Wright noted that this issue had been raised some time ago in the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee and questioned why it had taken so long to bring forward the project.
- Councillor Heather Williams welcomed the initiative to install solar panels at the Waterbeach depot but was concerned that this project had not been budgeted for. She commented that, conversely, there appeared to have been little or no expenditure on certain other projects, such as the telephony replacement project, for which budget provision had been made. Whilst recognising that things changed, Councillor Heather Williams cautioned against not spending in line with the budget.
- Councillor Peter Topping indicated a preference for spending from the Renewables Reserve rather than from the Transformation Reserve but believed that the Council should look wider than its own buildings in taking forward energy efficiency proposals.
- Referring to the comment about lack of budget, Councillor Pippa Heylings referred to her understanding that the previous climate and environment budget of £100k had been cut by the former administration. However, there had been no expenditure from the Renewables Reserves fund and this had therefore been used to take forward the energy efficiency initiative in order to take advantage of the last of the Government's feed-in tariffs and to bring in income to the Council.
- Councillor Bridget Smith commented that the strategy would not be just to spend reserves, it was important to invest in the transformation project because it would drive efficiencies and help deliver the future sustainability of the Council. She additionally defended the energy efficiency measures proposed for South Cambridgeshire Hall and argued that the Council needed to demonstrate its own sustainability credentials and to lead by example if it expected partners and developers to embark on a programme of decarbonisation.
- Councillor Deborah Roberts expressed concern at the proposal to spend £1.3 million on the energy efficiency and green energy measures identified in the report and questioned the value to the District's residents.
- Members referred to the previous refusal by the Planning Committee of an application to install solar panels over the car park at South Cambs Hall.
- Councillor Neil Gough re-iterated that it had been important to take the initiative to proceed with the solar panel project at Waterbeach in order to take advantage of the feed-in tariffs before they ended. He additionally referred to the significant work needed to get the footpath lighting upgrade project to implementation stage and echoed earlier comments about the need for the Council to lead by example by reducing the environment and carbon footprint of the Council's buildings.

Responding to earlier questions and comments and summing up on the motion, Councillor John Williams:-

- Observed that reserves had been used in the previous Council to balance the budget;
- Commented on the need to reassess the Council's telephony requirements having regard to the "Council Anywhere" project;
- Emphasised that the solar panel initiative at Waterbeach depot had been

pursued in order to take advantage of the Government feed-in tariffs and to secure income for the Council; and

- Stated that the previous budget for footpath lighting upgrades had been inadequate and that it had been necessary to review the current stock and the budget and this was why it had not been possible to bring forward the upgrade proposals more quickly.

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

**In favour: (37)**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Dr. Martin Cahn, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Clare Delderfield, Sue Ellington, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Mark Howell, Steve Hunt, Alex Malyon, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Peter Topping, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams, Eileen Wilson and Nick Wright.

**Against: (1)**

Councillor Deborah Roberts

**Abstain: (0)**

Council

**RESOLVED:**

To approve:

1. The allocation of additional funding of £545,000 from the Renewables Reserve to complete the footpath lighting upgrades given the environmental benefits, acknowledging that a full report will be submitted to Cabinet for approval that outlines the programme of work, timescales, costs and payback period;
2. The allocation of funding of £1,300,000 from the Renewables Reserve for a range of energy efficiency and green energy measures at South Cambridgeshire Hall, acknowledging that a full report will be submitted to Cabinet for approval that outlines the range of modifications and enhancements proposed, costs and payback period;
3. The revised General Fund capital programme for the period 2019/2020 to 2024/2025, reproduced at Appendix C of the report of the Head of Finance, to reflect the new scheme bids, amendments to the programme and the reprofiling of expenditure identified in the report.

**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 July and September 2019.

Councillor Bridget Smith, the Council's representative on the Combined Authority Board, gave an update as follows:-

- The new governance structure at the Combined Authority, involving executive committees, had now been implemented.
- The Board had met on 27 November 2019 and had approved an application to provide a loan facility of circa £6 million for a scheme to provide no less than 13 housing units, including 5 affordable homes, in Linton Road, Great Abingdon, to be funded from the £40m revolving fund element of the £100 million housing programme.
- The Mayor had received a letter from Jake Berry, Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, regarding a commitment to level up the powers of city region mayors and their combined authorities across the country. This commitment appeared to pave the way for increased delegation of powers to mayors and a potential reduction in the influence of boards.
- The Board had agreed to establish an Independent Commission on Climate Change. Some Board members had expressed concern at the potential for the Commission to duplicate work being done elsewhere. The Leader indicated that she had requested that the membership of the Commission should represent some of the exemplar work already underway, such as the Cambridge Zero initiative.

There were no updates from the Council's other representatives on the Combined Authority. Additionally, no questions were asked of the Council's representatives.

## **10. APPOINTMENT TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)**

The Council received the report of the Interim Director of Corporate Services which advised of the resignation of Simon Harris, one of the Council's current Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) members, with immediate effect. The report invited the Council to approve the appointment of Jane Phillips, who was a member of Cambridge City Council's IRP, as an interim member of the IRP. The Council was additionally invited to authorise the Interim Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the IRP, to undertake a recruitment and selection process to identify and recommend a permanent candidate for appointment.

In moving the recommendation in the report, the Leader of the Council paid tribute to Simon Harris for his work during his term of office as a member of the IRP and requested that a letter of thanks be sent on behalf of the Council.

Council, by affirmation

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That a letter be sent to Simon Harris thanking him, on behalf of the Council, for his work as a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
2. That Jane Phillips be appointed as an interim Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel until a permanent member can be appointed.
3. That the Interim Member be paid an allowance, pro rata of the annual rate of £200, for the months served on the Panel.
4. That the Interim Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the IRP, be authorised to undertake a recruitment and selection process to identify a permanent member of the panel and to recommend a candidate for appointment.

## 11. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman asked whether Group Leaders wished to report on any changes in membership in respect of places allocated to their Groups on committees.

Councillor Peter Topping reported on proposed changes to his Group's representation on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Councillor Bridget Smith reported on proposed changes to her Group's membership of the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee.

Council by affirmation

### RESOLVED:

That the following changes in committee membership and substitute appointments be noted and endorsed:

- (a) Scrutiny and Overview Committee:
  - (i) Councillor Ruth Betson replaced by Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya as a member of the committee; and
  - (ii) Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya replaced by Councillor Ruth Betson as a substitute member of the committee.
  
- (b) Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee:
  - (i) Councillor Steve Hunt replaced by Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton as a member of the joint committee; and
  - (ii) Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton replaced by Councillor Steve Hunt as a substitute member of the joint committee.

## 12. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

### 12 (a) From Councillor Peter Topping

To ask the lead member for planning if the briefing that was arranged on the Five-Year Land Supply at 0930 on the morning of the most recent Planning Committee meeting was a co-incidence or not?

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, indicated her surprise at the question as she had understood that Councillor Topping had wished a briefing to be held, given that he had requested such a briefing in a motion at the last Council meeting. She confirmed that this had been a coincidence and explained that the publication on Monday 11 November 2019 of the Council's joint housing trajectory had prompted a round of committee briefings to South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council's Planning Committees and the Joint Development Control Planning Committee. The briefing to the District Council's Planning Committee on 13 November 2019 had been the first available point at which members of the Planning Committee would have been together.

Councillor Peter Topping, as a supplementary question, asked whether Planning Committee members would be briefed any earlier if the next report published on the five

year land supply indicated a further reduction in the current position.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins explained that the five year land supply calculation published was for the joint, Greater Cambridge (Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire combined) five year land supply. The housing trajectory for South Cambridgeshire was 5.7, but when combined with the City was 5.3 years. Councillor Dr. Hawkins further commented that the reason for the difference between what was projected in Local Plan and the current position was that the Government had changed the way in which sites that could be delivered were calculated. She was happy to discuss the issue further with Councillor Topping outside the meeting and referred to an open invitation to Councillor Nick Wright to have monthly meetings.

## **12 (b) From Councillor Heather Williams**

Has the employment of an additional partnership officer (RECAP) to coordinate fly-tipping intelligence (as set out in the Business Plan) led to any prosecutions?

Councillor Bill Handley, the Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing, started by explaining the role of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) Partnership which covered 7 councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

He noted that the post was funded jointly by the partners in the RECAP Partnership. The officer had been in post for a few months and worked on a part time basis of 2.5 days per week. The focus of the role was on fly tipping, by coordinating intelligence and communications and the efforts of partners. The post holder also played a major role in the "SCRAP IT" anti-fly tipping campaign currently being run by the Council. Councillor Handley explained however that the officer was not involved in prosecutions as this did not form part of their remit and it had never been the intention to measure the success of the post in terms of number of prosecutions. However, he was able to report that in the past two years, the Council had undertaken 228 investigations; 43 fixed penalty notices; 3 formal cautions and 2 prosecutions, with a further prosecution due to go to court in the spring. Councillor Handley concluded by stating that the benefit of RECAP was that it brought environmental officers together across borders and he cited the case of a recent successful joint investigation/prosecution relating to fly tipping incidents in two neighbouring councils.

Councillor Heather Williams asked, as a supplementary question, whether Councillor Handley had the prosecution figures just for the last year?

Councillor Handley indicated that he did not have those figures available but undertook to provide these to Councillor Heather Williams outside of the meeting.

## **13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **13 (a) Motion from Councillor Pippa Heylings**

Councillor Pippa Heylings moved the following motion, as set out on the agenda:

"This Council was one of the first District Councils to pledge a Zero Carbon target back in November 2018, before national government announced its Zero Carbon by 2050 legislation. The unanimous motion focused on delivering Zero Carbon by 2050 across



the Greater Cambridge area through the next Local Plan and, indeed, the climate emergency is now a key issue for the new Local Development Plan, which is currently being drafted. Since last November, the Council has ensured that Zero Carbon is central to its corporate Business Plan, budget and new green investment strategy - in order to ensure the resources and officer time necessary to become the greenest Council. It has installed solar panels at the Waterbeach Waste Depot, drafted new Supplementary Planning guidance to support existing policy, and set up the new Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme. More still needs to be done. The Council is collating and commissioning evidence to determine how and when carbon reduction targets in each sector will be reached.

The Council, therefore, pledges to:

1. Declare a Climate Emergency;
2. Report to Full Council within 6 months on the carbon reduction targets and projects for the Council's own buildings and operations;
3. Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions by the Council are in line with a shift to zero carbon;
4. Ensure that the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan fulfills its role in bringing forward net zero carbon development, particularly in new housing and infrastructure, as well as ensuring that new development can adapt to our changing climate;
5. Work with partners across the district to deliver this target through investment, skills, strategies and planning; and
6. In order to enable South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the UK to reach net zero carbon before 2050, call on government, industry and regulators to implement the necessary changes with funding, transformed national infrastructure, policy, new technologies and legislation."

In moving her motion, Councillor Heylings outlined the positive measures the Council had taken in support of the motion adopted, with cross party support, on 29 November 2018, to transition to zero carbon through the Local Plan by 2050. However, she argued that there was still more to be done, referring to recent reports that the world may have already crossed a series of climate tipping points, with a warning of an existential threat to civilisation as impacts led to a cascade of unstoppable events and that there was now a need for urgent international action. Councillor Heylings urged the Council to join other authorities in declaring a climate emergency and to take the actions outlined in her motion, including calling for a report to be submitted to the Council within 6 months on carbon reduction targets and projects for the Council's own buildings and operations. With respect to paragraph 3 of the motion, Councillor Heylings clarified that this proposal was intended to cover all strategic decisions, budgets and **approaches to the Council's own future planning decisions** to ensure they were in line with the transition to zero carbon.

Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the motion and echoed the concerns expressed by Councillor Heylings. She referred to her recent attendance at the launch of the Cambridge Zero initiative and noted that David Attenborough, who had addressed the event remotely, had commented on the need for everyone to change their behaviours and share the responsibility for saving the planet.

During discussion:

- Councillor Deborah Roberts was not supportive of the motion and felt that until political leaders in the top carbon emitting countries faced their responsibilities, it was unrealistic to expect that any action taken by the Council would make a difference. She argued that officers should concentrate on their core jobs rather

than focusing on activities related to tackling climate change.

- Councillor Tom Bygott spoke of the importance of meeting the national carbon targets before 2050 and believed that the Council should aim to meet its targets even earlier. He commented that improvements in air quality would benefit public health and, as green technology was the industry of the future, would also help to boost the local economy by supporting the many start-up companies in South Cambridgeshire.
- Councillor Peter Topping felt that it was important further to investigate positive action which the Council could take to contribute to carbon reduction locally, for example, by installing sustainable fuel efficient boilers in Council homes, especially for vulnerable and elderly tenants; providing for electric car charging points within new developments and considering the impact of potential flooding when considering planning applications.
- Councillor Grenville Chamberlain was supportive of the motion but argued that there was a need for total commitment by the Council to its zero carbon goals, referring to a potential infrastructure development under consideration by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, in which the Council was a partner, affecting his ward which might result in the removal of hundreds of trees.
- Councillor Brian Milnes commented that climate change was imminent; that the Council had the opportunity to take action which would have a meaningful local impact and that adopting the motion would demonstrate responsible climate leadership.
- Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya supported the motion but felt that it was important that countries had regard to their international responsibilities and desisted from dumping rubbish in developing countries.
- Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins responded to the comment on charging points for electric vehicles, noting that the Council had to act in accordance with the policies in the current Local Plan in setting requirements for the provision of such charging points in new developments. However, it was anticipated that the new Local Plan would enhance the requirements relating to the provision of electric charging points.

In summing up, Councillor Heylings responded to the points raised in the debate, acknowledging the opportunity presented to grow the green economy in the District; agreeing that the Authority should investigate energy efficiency improvements in Council houses, especially for vulnerable people, and endorsing the view that waste should not be exported from developed to developing countries. She concluded by emphasising the climate emergency that the world was facing and the need for every local authority to act now to accelerate the shift towards zero carbon.

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

**In favour (36):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Dr. Martin Cahn, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Clare Delderfield, Sue Ellington, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Mark Howell, Steve Hunt, Alex Malyon, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams, Eileen Wilson and Nick Wright.

**Against (1):**

Councillor Deborah Roberts

**Abstain (0):**

Council

**RESOLVED:**

This Council was one of the first District Councils to pledge a Zero Carbon target back in November 2018, before national government announced its Zero Carbon by 2050 legislation. The unanimous motion focused on delivering Zero Carbon by 2050 across the Greater Cambridge area through the next Local Plan and, indeed, the climate emergency is now a key issue for the new Local Development Plan, which is currently being drafted. Since last November, the Council has ensured that Zero Carbon is central to its corporate Business Plan, budget and new green investment strategy - in order to ensure the resources and officer time necessary to become the greenest Council. It has installed solar panels at the Waterbeach Waste Depot, drafted new Supplementary Planning guidance to support existing policy, and set up the new Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme. More still needs to be done. The Council is collating and commissioning evidence to determine how and when carbon reduction targets in each sector will be reached.

The Council, therefore, pledges to:

1. Declare a Climate Emergency;
2. Report to Full Council within 6 months on the carbon reduction targets and projects for the Council's own buildings and operations;
3. Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions by the Council are in line with a shift to zero carbon;
4. Ensure that the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan fulfills its role in bringing forward net zero carbon development, particularly in new housing and infrastructure, as well as ensuring that new development can adapt to our changing climate;
5. Work with partners across the district to deliver this target through investment, skills, strategies and planning; and
6. In order to enable South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the UK to reach net zero carbon before 2050, call on government, industry and regulators to implement the necessary changes with funding, transformed national infrastructure, policy, new technologies and legislation.

**13 (b) Motion from Councillor Mark Howell**

Councillor Mark Howell moved and Councillor Henry Batchelor seconded, the following motion:

“South Cambridgeshire District Council believes all sectors of the community should be able to access its services. This Council asks the Disability Task and Finish Group to examine the British Deaf Association Charter which is designed as a vehicle to remove direct and indirect discrimination, empower local deaf communities and improve dialogue between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Deaf people.”

Councillor Mark Howell asked the Council to endorse his proposal for the Disability Task and Finish Group to examine the British Deaf Association British Sign Language (BSL) Charter. He explained that the Charter contained five pledges to improve access and

rights for deaf people who used sign language. Councillor Howell believed that it would be relatively easy for the Council to commit to the first three pledges in the Charter, however compliance with the remaining two pledges was likely to require some work, hence the proposed reference to the task and finish group. He provided some background on BSL and its use and outlined the potential benefits that could be achieved by signing up to the Charter, including empowering local deaf communities and improving dialogue between the Council and deaf customers.

Councillor Henry Batchelor, in his capacity as Chairman of the Employment and Staffing Committee, reported that he had spoken with Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson, the Chair of the Disability Task and Finish Group, and that she was supportive of the group considering whether to sign up to the BSL Charter.

Council by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

South Cambridgeshire District Council believes all sectors of the community should be able to access its services. This Council asks the Disability Task and Finish Group to examine the British Deaf Association Charter which is designed as a vehicle to remove direct and indirect discrimination, empower local deaf communities and improve dialogue between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Deaf people.

**13 (c) Motion from Councillor Peter Topping**

Councillor Peter Topping moved and Councillor Deborah Roberts seconded the following motion:

“This Council agrees that all budget holding “lead cabinet members” should hold at least 3 public meetings per calendar year.”

Councillor Topping reminded the Council that a similar motion had been presented by Councillor Bridget Smith in November 2017 and asked that consideration be given, as part of the transformation agenda, to holding Lead Cabinet Member meetings. He spoke of the perceived benefits of the previous portfolio holder meetings which had enabled more informal engagement and dialogue between individual Cabinet members and opposition members and expressed the view that if decisions were only taken in formal Cabinet meetings this might potentially lead to a more polarised Council.

Councillor Deborah Roberts, in seconding the motion, suggested that the level of public engagement in this meeting might be regarded as indicating that the public felt that the Council was not listening to them. She believed that it was important that the public had the opportunity to engage with the individual Cabinet Member responsible for a particular function and was of the view that the previous portfolio holder meetings had provided such an opportunity.

Councillor Bridget Smith commented that her previous motion had highlighted the lack of consistency in terms of the holding of the former portfolio holder meetings, with some portfolio holders failing to hold meetings at all. She noted that portfolio holder meetings had been discontinued in favour of decisions being taken collectively at Cabinet meetings, which now met monthly and Cabinet members also attended Scrutiny and Overview Committee meetings which pre-scrutinised Cabinet decisions. Councillor Bridget Smith did not accept the suggestion that decision makers were not accessible to the public, noting that the public had been able to attend this meeting, to ask questions and receive responses. She referred to previous criticism that the number of meetings

had increased since May 2018, but observed that this motion, if approved, would further increase the number of meetings. Councillor Bridget Smith concluded by indicating that she would be looking at the structure and organisation of the Cabinet in the light of the organisational review and added that Cabinet members were available to meet with any member of the Council outside of formal meetings.

Councillor Heather Williams commented that reports were not received from individual Cabinet members at Council meetings and there was accordingly not an opportunity to question them. Moreover, she pointed out that individual decisions were taken outside of meetings by Cabinet members under delegated powers. She argued that such decisions should be taken at public meetings.

Councillor Peter Topping summed up and called for the Council to support his motion.

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

**In favour (14):**

Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Jose Hales, Mark Howell, Deborah Roberts, Peter Topping, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

(Note: Councillor Anna Bradnam indicated after the meeting that she inadvertently voted in favour of the motion and had intended to vote against it).

**Against (22):**

Councillors Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Dr. Martin Cahn, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Clare Delderfield, Neil Gough, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Ian Sollom, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Abstain (0):**

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

**14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements since the last Council meeting, as set out on the agenda.

The Chairman reported verbally that the Vice-Chairman had attended the USAF 501st Combat Support Wing Thanksgiving at Alconbury on Monday 25 November 2019.

**15. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman invited the Council to consider whether the ensuing item of business contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Chairman having moved, and Councillor Anna Bradnam having seconded the motion, Council, by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

That the following item of business contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Chairman then moved and Councillor Anna Bradnam seconded:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that, if present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

Council, by affirmation

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that, if present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

**16. POTENTIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION - CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE PARK**

The Council considered an exempt report seeking its approval for a commercial property investment that would enable the Council to pursue its Business Plan objective of supporting businesses, as well as delivering positive financial returns for the Council.

A supplement to the report, which contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, had been circulated to all Councillors and drew attention to a change in the proposed VAT treatment of the acquisition.

In moving the recommendation in the report, Councillor John Williams, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, provided further background and context regarding the revised VAT position with the purchase, as the building was not tenanted, and, in particular, drew attention to the consequential variation in the purchase price and other associated costs, as set out in the supplement to the report.

Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the motion.

During discussion, some Members expressed reservations about the investment. Councillor Nick Wright moved and Councillor Grenville Chamberlain seconded the following amendment:

“That the decision be deferred until a tenant is found”.

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

**In favour (13):**

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

**Against (23):**

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

**Abstain (0):**

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

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

**In favour (24):**

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

**Against (12):**

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

**Abstain (0):**

Council

**RESOLVED:**

To agree:

1. The investment of up to the sum referred to in the exempt report from the Interim Director of Finance, as amended by the exempt supplement and revised Appendix A circulated to all Members, comprising property acquisition costs and refurbishment and letting costs in accordance with the approved Investment Strategy, to acquire the property at Cambridge Science Park and to refurbish the building as a multi-let office investment.
2. The re-profiling of the Investment Strategy capital allocations to bring forward sufficient funds to enable the property at 1. above to be acquired in 2019/2020 and refurbishment to be commenced thereafter.
3. The use of the General Reserve, if required, for the potential revenue cost

impacts of the acquisition, prior to the realisation and inclusion of the net additional income from the portfolio investment in the revenue budget.

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**The Meeting ended at 4.57 p.m.**

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