

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 21 May 2020 at 2.00 p.m.

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

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

<b>Officers:</b>	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Aaron Clarke	Democratic Services Officer
	Kathrin John	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice/Monitoring Officer
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Gavin Clayton, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Tony Mason, Judith Rippeth and Dr. Ian Sollom.

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

None.

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

The Chairman requested that Members inform Democratic Services of any changes to their registered interests.

### **4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 February were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- Councillor Claire Daunton to be recorded as acting in the place of the Vice Chairman.
- In minute 5, Councillor Heather Williams' name to be correctly recorded.
- In minute 8(d), the first bullet point to read "... by the police or an enforcement officer."
- In minute 8(d), the duplication of the heading "Ultra-low and Zero" be removed.
- In minute 16(c), the word lman be corrected to "Imam".

In response to a query from Councillor Nick Wright, Councillor Bridget Smith, the Leader of Council, apologised for the lateness of responses to requests for information made at the last Council meeting. This was due to the pressure officers had been under because

of the COVID-19 virus.

## 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

- Councillor Dr. Richard Williams was welcomed to his first Council meeting.
- Sadly, Planning Enforcement Officer William Trotter had died following a short illness. A letter of condolence had been sent to his family.
- The Chair and the Vice-Chair had donated three months' worth of their special responsibility allowances to the Chair's charities and other councillors were encouraged to do the same.
- £1,300 had been raised for both the Carers' Trust and the Trussell Trust.

The Leader also welcomed Councillor Dr. Richard Williams to his new role and expressed her condolences to the colleagues, friends and family of William Trotter. She thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for agreeing to continue in their respective roles due to the current circumstances. She extended those thanks to all Chairs, Vice-Chairs and committee members who were expecting to move on, but had accepted the need to provide stability at the current time.

## 6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

### 6 (a) From Mr David Brown

Mr David Brown had submitted the following question:

"This Council has met only once so far this year, on 20 February 2020. Six days after that meeting on 26 February, officers of this Council stated to members of the public in a legal undertaking that the Council's scheme of delegation for planning decisions in effect prior to February 2020 would remain in effect unless or until the full Council decided otherwise.

"But then nine days later, and without this Council having met, officers stated to the High Court that the Council had amended its scheme of delegation on 12 February.

"Both of these statements can not be true.

"Can the Leader of the Council please explain which of the preceding statements is in fact true and please explain how ordinary members of the public such as myself should know which statements made by the Council's officers can be relied upon to be truthful and which can not?"

The Chair noted that Mr Brown was unable to attend the meeting to ask his question in person and had asked that he be provided with a written response.

The Leader of Council provided the following statement in response to the question, which also formed the written response which was provided to Mr Brown after the meeting:

"Planning Committee met on 12 February and changed the scheme of delegation. We reported this to the High Court in a case related to Steeple Morden on 6 March. We were challenged that only Council could make this change. Rather than cause any further delay in defending our decision on 12 February, we decided to take the decision to Council. For reasons we are all aware of, April Council was postponed, and the item is on our agenda today. I am sorry that Mr Brown did not understand the sequence of events. The court has today refused permission for the challenge to proceed at Steeple

Morden on the basis that it is unarguable.”

## 7. PETITIONS

The Chair explained that the Council had not received any petitions since the previous Council meeting.

## 8. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair noted that, whilst in accordance with Council Standing Order 2, items 8 and 9 of the agenda would ordinarily be taken following consideration of reports and recommendations of Cabinet and committees (item 11), he considered that it would be conducive to the dispatch of business for these items to be dealt with as the first substantive items of business on the agenda. He therefore moved, and Councillor Bridget Smith seconded a proposal to vary the order of business to enable the items to be taken in the order indicated on the agenda.

Council, by affirmation,

### RESOLVED

To deal with the times of business in the order indicated in the agenda.

## 9. COVID-19 - CHANGES TO DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

The Chair proposed and Councillor Heather Williams seconded the recommendations in the report with the removal of paragraph 5(j), as a duplication, and the removal of the requirement in Standing Orders for councillors to stand at remote meetings of Council.

By affirmation, Council **RESOLVED** to

- A) Endorse the postponement of the annual Council meeting in view of the Government's COVID 19 restrictions and agree that prior to 7 May 2021 an annual meeting of the Council shall only take place following lifting of the Covid 19 restrictions by the Government and confirmation that it is safe to return to physical meetings:
  - (a) where called by the Chair; or
  - (b) where called by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer; or
  - (c) following a resolution calling for an Annual Meeting being passed at an ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the Council.
- B) Note that, as a consequence of A) above, all current appointments of chairmen, vice-chairmen and of members of committees, joint committees, other bodies and substitutes shall continue until the next annual meeting or until such time as the Council may determine.
- C) Endorse the decision of the Chief Executive to convene this meeting as an ordinary meeting of the Council, and authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader and/or relevant Chair(s), to alter the frequency of, move or cancel meetings or to vary the dates and times of meetings, as required.
- D) Approve the Standing Order for remote meetings, as set out at Appendix A, with the additional amendment removing the need for Members to stand when speaking at meetings of Full Council and the removal of paragraph 5.1(j) in the Public

Questions Scheme, as it is a duplication.

#### 10. **PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION (PLANNING COMMITTEE - 12 FEBRUARY 2020)**

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, presented this report, which recommended amendments to the Planning Scheme of Delegation that had been agreed by the Planning Committee on 12 February 2020. In moving the recommendation, Councillor Dr. Hawkins stated that the proposed amendment would remove ambiguity. She explained that the Planning Scheme of Delegations was changed in 2016, to allow decisions to be referred to the Planning Committee if the Chairman of the Committee and the Joint Director of Planning agreed to reasons provided by the Parish Council or Local Member. It was noted that the Planning Advisory Service had been commissioned to undertake a review of the three Greater Cambridge planning committees later in the year.

Councillor John Batchelor seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Nick Wright seconded the following amendment:

“That the motion be amended by the deletion of the words shown in strikethrough and the addition of the words shown in **bold** text

4. It is recommended that Council: -

(a) Approves and adopts the changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegation as set out in Appendix A, which was determined by Planning Committee at its meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, **subject to the amendment of the paragraph numbered 1 in the Powers and Functions delegated by Planning Committee in Appendix A to read as follows:**

1. A local member or Parish Council writes, or emails a request for a particular application to be considered by Planning Committee, ~~sound planning reasons are given for why this is considered necessary and the request is accepted by the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee (or Vice Chair in his/her absence).~~ **and the officer’s recommendation is in conflict with that of the parish council or the local member who has made the request.**

**(b) and** ~~authorise~~ officers to confirm the necessary changes to the constitution that have been made, **subject to the further change, as set out above, being made**, and to allow officers to proceed to take delegated decisions.”

Councillor Heather Williams expressed the view that the amendment was democratic and would encourage more involvement from residents, which would enhance the reputation of the Council and restore faith in the planning system.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins stated that the right for an automatic referral had been removed by the Conservative administration in 2016. Parish councils were statutory consultees, their views were valued and their concerns were recognised, but an automatic referral would remove the control of the Planning Committee’s agenda away from the Council to parish councils. Many parish councillors were elected unopposed, so to empower them in this way could be regarded as undemocratic. The Council would engage with parish councils in the forthcoming review.

Councillor Deborah Roberts stated that the Leader had written to all parish councils, promising full participation in the consultation process, but the consultation had not happened and so it was wrong to make a decision now. She asserted that parish councils brought local knowledge to the process and she objected to the comment that

they were not elected.

Councillor Peter McDonald stated that there needed to be a compromise between working efficiently and working democratically. He trusted the Chair to challenge officers with any concerns raised by a parish council. He agreed that local members must have a full voice and that any decision not to refer an application to the Planning Committee needed a full explanation. Parish councils needed to be able to speak to officers, online if possible. He repeated that the changes had been made to the referral process in 2016.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain said that the original motion would make the process less democratic and that if the Council believed in open and transparent governance, all tiers should have input into planning decisions. Parish councillors were hard working volunteers and their views should be taken seriously.

Councillor Ruth Betson read out statements from town and parish councils that expressed concern about the proposal to give the Joint Planning Director final say on whether applications went to the Planning Committee and stated that the number of planning applications going to the Committee had reduced since 2016.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams suggested that the Council should trust parish councils and local members to use their power to defer a decision to the Planning Committee responsibly. It was democratic to empower local views.

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that the democratic decision making process should not be subverted in the name of efficient governance. Parish councils and local members should be allowed to refer applications to the Planning Committee regarding decisions that affected people's lives.

Councillor Brian Milnes stated that the previous administration had removed the right of parish councils to automatically refer applications to the planning committee. He suggested that local members should work in harmony with parish councils to ensure that substantive concerns were taken into account.

Councillor Sue Ellington explained that her Parish Council has asked her to support the amendment, as they believed that their views had not been heard on issues that affected the village.

Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn stated that the proposed amendment prejudiced the Planning Advisory Service review, which would consult with all statutory consultees, including parish councils.

Councillor Nick Wright stated that 99% of decisions were taken by officers and so it was reasonable to make the process more democratic and allow more applications to be determined by the Planning Committee. He suggested that agreeing the proposal unamended would give the impression that the Council was run by officers. He urged councillors to support the amendment, which he regarded as simple, clear, legal and fair.

A vote was taken on the amendment and votes were cast as follows:

**In favour (12):** Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Deborah Roberts, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, Dr. Richard Williams and Nick Wright.

**Against (27):** Councillors Philip Allen, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Claire

Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

### **Abstain (0)**

The Chairman declared the amendment **LOST**.

Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer referred to the views of the local MP on the motion but noted that he did not live in the District. He stated that he did not remember the Conservative members expressing concerns about democracy in 2016 when their administration introduced the current system. He supported constructive engagement with parish councils during the review.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed concern at the change that allowed an officer to prevent a planning application being determined by the Planning Committee, asserting that this power should reside with the Chair. She stated that the local MP was elected by local residents and so his views were relevant.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams suggested that the first two paragraphs of the proposed scheme were ambiguous and apparently contradictory and it was not clear whether the footnote was intended to be binding. The Deputy Head of Legal Practice/Monitoring Officer explained that the status of the footnote was as guidance for officers and that the proposed scheme had been subject to external legal scrutiny.

Councillor Neil Gough stated that these proposals had the right balance between due process and efficiency. He agreed that all parish councils should receive an explanation if their request for an application to be determined by the Planning Committee was rejected. It was probable that some concerns expressed were not material planning considerations. This feedback could promote understanding and proper engagement in the planning process.

Councillor Graham Cone stated that he opposed the motion, as it meant that councillors no longer decided what went to the Planning Committee. The vote by the Planning Committee on these proposals had been close, with 5 in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention.

Councillor Deborah Roberts asserted that the Council should have waited for the results of the consultation process. She was of the view that the proposals were giving too much power to officers and could be subject to a legal challenge.

Councillor Nick Wright suggested that after the independent review was complete, these proposed changes would have to be reversed.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart stated that there were sufficient safeguards in the proposals to protect the democratic process, as it ensured that valid points made by parish councils would be considered. He expressed concern that with the joint planning arrangements with the City Council, the interests of the District could suffer.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton expressed support for the proposals and asserted that the views of parish councils must be considered in the forthcoming review.

Councillor Tom Bygott opposed the motion, as he believed that it was undemocratic in an area that affected all residents.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain stated that the views of parish councils should not be ignored and so he opposed the motion.

Councillor Pippa Heylings stated that as Vice Chair of the Planning Committee she was impressed by the time and effort made by parish councillors when engaging with the planning process. She supported the current review, which would ensure that the views of all interested parties were listened to.

Councillor John Batchelor stated that he was sympathetic to the points made, but the changes proposed were minor. As Chair of the Committee he would not be instructed what to do by officers. He urged members to support this “holding position”, which ensured the Council met its legal requirements, before the results of the review were known.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins recognised that this was an emotive subject, but believed that the proposals were the right balance between democracy and lawfulness. She explained that the three Team Leaders would have met with parish councils had it not been for the lockdown and that this meeting would now take place online. She recognised that the relationship between the Council and parish councils needed to improve. She indicated that parish councils would be given feedback whenever their request to refer an application to the Planning Committee was refused.

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

**In Favour (27):** Councillors Philip Allen, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Claire Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, 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, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, Dr. Richard Williams and Nick Wright.

**Abstain (0)**

Council

**RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegation as set out in Appendix A which was determined by Planning Committee at its meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> February and authorise officers to confirm the necessary changes to the constitution that have been made and to allow officers to proceed to take delegated decisions.

## 11. WHITTLESFORD BY-ELECTION

Council **NOTED** the election of Councillor Dr. Richard Williams to the Whittlesford ward. This had resulted in no change to the political balance of the Council.

## 12. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

**12 (a) Adoption of Revised Constitution (Civic Affairs Committee - 3 March 2020)**

Councillor Dr Douglas de Lacey, Chair of Council, introduced this report, which recommended that Council adopt the revised Constitution, Ethical Handbook, Public Speaking Scheme and Petitions Scheme. He explained that it was a “living document” and so it was proposed that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chair, would have delegated authority to make minor amendments prior to publication.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton thanked Councillor Mark Howell and Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, the two other members of the Constitution Review Task and Finish Group. She also thanked the Group’s supporting officers for the immense amount of work they had carried out. She added that external solicitors had examined the proposals and recommended certain amendments.

Councillor Heather Williams congratulated all those who worked on the production of the new Constitution, but explained that she could not support its adoption, as it would include rules on the Planning Scheme of Delegation that she was opposed to.

Councillor Hazel Smith congratulated the Constitution Review Task and Finish Group on doing an excellent job of modernising the constitution.

Councillor Deborah Roberts stated that the Constitution had grown in size, which made it more difficult to find information, compared to the old document.

Councillor Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer congratulated officers and councillors involved in producing the new Constitution and expressed his disappointment at the fact that there was no consensus regarding its agreement. He stated that legal requirements made it impossible to produce a short document and the new Constitution’s improved structure made it more usable than before.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins stated that unfortunately Cambridgeshire County Council had indicated its intention to withdraw from the Joint Development Control Committee Cambridge Fringes and so this part of the Constitution would have to be amended.

Councillor Nick Wright regretted that his group could not support this, but this was due to their opposition to the Planning Scheme of Delegation.

Councillor Eileen Wilson and Councillor Bill Handley expressed concern about the accuracy of the map of the wards in Part 8 of the draft Constitution.

Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn stated that the terms of reference of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee in the new Constitution would have to be updated if Council agreed the proposed amendments later in the meeting. He explained that Constitutions had to be long to avoid ambiguity.

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that he could not support the Constitution as he opposed the Scheme of Planning Delegation. He expressed concern at the fact that only one page in the Constitution was dedicated to citizens’ rights and highlighted the section on citizen’s conduct.

Councillor Pippa Heylings welcomed the democratic provisions in the new Constitution which allowed public questions three days before the meeting, compared to seven days in the old Constitution. She expressed disappointment that not all councillors were supporting this.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of Council, welcomed the new Constitution, which was written in plain English, complied with the new regulations on accessibility and was easier to navigate than the Constitution it replaced. She thanked the cross-party Constitution Review Task and Finish Group and the supporting officers for their efforts and expressed her disappointment that there was not unanimous support for it.

Councillor Dr Douglas de Lacey proposed and Councillor Dr Claire Daunton seconded the recommendations in the report, a vote was taken and were cast as follows:

**In Favour (28):** Councillors Philip Allen, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Claire Delderfield, Peter Fane, Neil Gough, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Philippa Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Steve Hunt, Alex Malyon, Peter McDonald, Brian Milnes, Dawn Percival, Nick Sample, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

**Against (10):** Councillors Ruth Betson, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Deborah Roberts, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams and Nick Wright.

**Abstain (0)**

Council **RESOLVED** to

- A)** Adopt, subject to (B) below, the revised Constitution (Appendix B), Ethical Handbook (Appendix C), Public Speaking Scheme (Appendix D1) and Petitions Scheme (Appendix D2) with effect from 22 May 2020.
- B)** Note that, for the conduct of virtual meetings, the Constitution may be superseded by the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and any revised Standing Orders agreed by the Council relating to virtual meetings.
- C)** Authorise the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chair of the Council, to make any further typographical or minor amendments to the Constitution prior to its publication.

**12 (b) MILTON COUNTRY PARK AND FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 (Cabinet - 6 May 2020)**

Councillor John Williams proposed, and Councillor Hazel Smith seconded, the recommendations in the report to award a conditional grant of £50,000 to Cambridge Sports Lake Trust to ensure that they can continue running Milton Country Park.

Councillor John Williams explained that Cambridge Sports Lake Trust needed this grant to continue running Milton Country Park, which provided a green space for local residents to enjoy. The second instalment would be conditional on a favourable review.

Councillor Hazel Smith stated that residents were more reliant than ever on open spaces, but Cambridge Sports Lake Trust relied on events for revenue, which could not take place during the lockdown. Milton Country Park had agreed to pay £10,000 and she urged Council to support the proposed grant.

Councillor Peter Fane expressed his support for the grant and the continuation of free

access for residents to Milton Country Park to ensure they could enjoy open spaces.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the proposed grant to keep the Park open for residents.

Councillor Deborah Roberts explained that the Cambridge Sports Lake Trust had been given a one-off grant when it took over the running of the Park and that should be the last payment made by the Council. She asked if the Cambridge City Council were offering any financial support to the park that was predominantly used by residents from Cambridge and Milton.

Councillor Eileen Wilson supported the grant to ensure that local residents could continue to walk and cycle in a local park.

Councillor Nick Wright explained that even when the costs had been greatly reduced, the running of the park still cost the Council £70,000 a year. He supported the proposed grant as a cost effective way of ensuring that the park remained open.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins stated that the park was a great asset for the District and pre-lockdown, a Park Run was held every Saturday. The park was enjoyed by visitors from other villages and should remain open.

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that he and his family from Sawston had visited the park for 14 years and he supported the proposed grant.

Councillor John Williams explained that Cambridge Sports Lake Trust needed the grant due to the impact of COVID-19 and otherwise a request would not have been made. If the Trust were unable to run the Park, the Council would become responsible for it, which would cost more than £50,000.

With one vote against (Councillor Deborah Roberts) and the rest in support, Council **AGREED** that

- A)** SCDC issues a conditional grant of £50,000 to Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust, ratifies the first instalment of £25,000 in May 2020 and agrees to the second £25,000 no earlier than September 2020.
- B)** The first instalment is subject to Head of Finance reviewing the Trust's current financial position via bank statements.
- C)** The second instalment is subject to Head of Finance reviewing the Trust's Management Accounts in addition to business efficiency measures, fundraising efforts and revised cashflow forecast.

### **13. ZERO CARBON STRATEGY**

Councillor Pippa Heylings introduced a report presenting the Council's Zero Carbon Strategy. In so doing, she explained that the Council had a significant role in reducing carbon use by 50% by 2030 to help prevent climate change and its impact.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the adoption of the Strategy and thanked the officers and councillors involved in its production.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart supported the Strategy and hoped that more could be done to repair vehicles, instead of scrapping them.

Councillor Steve Hunt supported the Strategy and hoped that some of the environmental

benefits caused by the lockdown could be maintained in the long term with the continuation of homeworking. Councillor Eileen Wilson agreed and hoped that the increase in walking and cycling in her village of Cottenham could be maintained.

Councillor Heylings welcomed the cross party support for this Strategy and expected that it would help ensure sustainable development.

Councillor Heylings proposed and Councillor Heather Williams seconded the adoption of the Zero Carbon Strategy. A vote was taken and, by affirmation, Council

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Zero Carbon Strategy.

#### **14. TERMS OF REFERENCE - CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Pippa Heylings explained that the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee had been set up in 2018 and with the agreement of the Zero Carbon Strategy it was appropriate to agree revised term of reference for the Committee.

Councillor Geoff Harvey reported that the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee had benefited from a great depth of knowledge and cross-party co-operation. Councillor Heather Williams expressed her party's support for these terms of reference.

Councillor Pippa Heylings proposed and Councillor Geoff Harvey seconded the new terms of reference of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee.

Council, by affirmation,

**RESOLVED** to approve the revised terms of reference of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, as set out in Appendix A and agreed that the necessary amendments be made to Part 3 of the Constitution.

#### **15. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

The Leader gave a statement on the Council's response to the COVID-19 virus. She stated that the authority was considered to be a high performing Council and the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government had asked her to address a Committee of 50 MPs. She recognised the extra work, new duties and longer hours being carried out by officers. A support network now covered all 103 villages and one town in the District and all vulnerable residents had been contacted. There had been co-operation with Cambridge City Council and the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Advice and financial support had been provided to local businesses.

The Leader was a board member of the District Council Network and encouraged all members to read their statement on going forward. The Leader concluded that for the future the Council should focus on business recovery, maintaining the network of voluntary workers and maintaining the increase in walking and cycling.

Council **NOTED** the report.

#### **16. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Councillor Henry Batchelor explained that following a rigorous appointment process, the Panel had unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Anne Ainsworth to the new role of Chief Operating Officer. He proposed that Council agree the appointment. Councillor Heather Williams seconded this proposal.

Council, by affirmation, **RESOLVED** to

- A)** Approve the appointment of Anne Ainsworth as Chief Operating Officer for South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- B)** Note that a provisional offer of employment has been made, subject to two exemplary references, health clearance and eligibility checks in accordance with the Council's policies. The necessary references have been received.
- C)** Agree that the appointment commence on a date to be mutually agreed.
- D)** Agree that the salary to be offered is £103,000 which is within the Council's salary range for this post as set out in the Pay Policy Statement (£92,035 to £108,275 per annum).
- E)** Confirm that the appointment will be subject to a 6-month probation period.

**17. THE WRITING OFF OF OUTSTANDING DEBT 2019-20**

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, presented this report on the debts written off under powers delegated to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance and the Chief Financial Officer.

Council **NOTED** the report.

**18. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY**

The Council noted reports prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority summarising the work of the Authority during March and April 2020.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of Council, explained that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority were currently focused on business recovery in response to COVID-19. She had not supported the Local Transport Plan Strategy, as it had not taken into account the views of other local authorities and the Local Plan.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed concern at the failure to appoint a Chairman of the Commission on Climate Change and that the Committee had questioned the Chief Executive on this.

Council **NOTED** the reports.

**19. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council **NOTED** the replacement of Councillor Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya by Councillor Dr. Richard Williams on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

**20. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2020/21**

Council agreed that its budget meeting should be scheduled for 11 February 2021 to avoid meeting during half-term.

Council **NOTED** the schedule of its meetings for 2020/21 as follows:

- Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 2pm

- Thursday 24 September 2020 at 2pm
- Thursday 26 November 2020 at 2pm
- Thursday 11 February 2021 at 2pm
- Thursday 15 April 2021 at 2pm
- Thursday 20 May 2021 at 2pm (Annual Meeting)

**21. CHAIR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Council **NOTED** the Chair's engagements since the last Council meeting.

**22. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair moved, the Vice-Chair seconded and Council, by affirmation:

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items 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).

**23. NORTHSTOWE TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PHASE 1 (CABINET - 4 MARCH 2020)**

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, proposed and Councillor Neil Gough seconded the recommendation in the report. Cllr Dr. Martin Cahn noted that the figure referred to in paragraph 11 of the report was different to that in the recommendation in paragraph 3 and it was confirmed that the correct figure was the one shown in the recommendation.

By affirmation, Council

**RESOLVED** to approve the establishment of a provision of the amount detailed in the confidential report, for the potential shortfall in the Northstowe Phase 1 Section 106 funding and that the General Fund be reduced by a corresponding amount.

**24. MINUTES (EXEMPT)**

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Bridget Smith seconded that Council agree the exempt minute. By affirmation Council

**RESOLVED**

That the Minute of the meeting held on 20 February 2020, which contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), be approved as a correct record.

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**The Meeting ended at 5.35 p.m.**

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