

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 26 November 2020 at 2.00 p.m.

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

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

<b>Officers:</b>	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Rebecca Dobson	Democratic Services Manager
	Rory McKenna	Deputy Head of Legal Practice/Monitoring Officer
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

### **Presentation**

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Dawn Percival, Judith Rippeth and Nick Sample

#### **2. Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Nick Wright declared a non-pecuniary interest as a farmer in agenda item 13a. He participated in the debate but did not vote. Councillor Peter McDonald also declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13a, as he carried out work within the agricultural sector.

#### **3. Register of Interests**

The Chair requested that Members inform Democratic Services of any changes in their Register of Members' Financial and Other Interests form.

#### **4. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following minor amendments:

- On page 2, “Council John Williams” was amended to “Councillor John Williams”.
- On page 4, “was sufficient funds” was amended to “were sufficient funds”.
- On page 5, “for Councillor Mark Howell” was amended to “from Councillor Mark Howell”.
- On page 11, “Civic Affairs Committee” was amended to “Civic Affairs Committee”.
- On page 14, “enforcement issues” was amended to “enforcement issue”.
- On page 16, “renewal energy” was amended to “renewable energy”.
- On page 16, the comma after the word grid was removed.

In reply to Councillor Nick Wright, Councillor Peter McDonald confirmed that he understood that he was listed as a former director of Visit Cambridge and Beyond, but he would check this.

## **5. Announcements**

The Chair and Leader welcomed Rebecca Dobson to her first Council meeting as the new Democratic Services Manager.

The Leader announced that Councillors John Batchelor and Dr Ian Sollom had been replaced by Councillors Jose Hales and Geoff Harvey on the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that Councillor Dr Richard Williams had replaced Councillor Tom Bygott as a substitute on the Civic Affairs Committee.

## **6. Questions From the Public**

Mr Daniel Fulton alleged that the Council had pledged to review the planning delegation scheme in 2018 and that this had not taken place. He also alleged that the Council had avoided judicial review on a technicality. He claimed that public funds had been improperly spent in pay offs to a former Chief Executive and allowances to the Leader. He opposed the Council’s decision to recover legal costs from the Fews Lane consortium which was only trying to scrutinise the Council. He then asked his question: “Is the Leader of the Council satisfied with the manner in which the Council has addressed the problems in its previous planning delegation scheme?”

The Leader thanked Mr Fulton for his question. She explained that changes to the planning delegation scheme was part of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review and the Council awaited its recommendations.

In a supplementary question Mr Fulton asked if the Leader and the Council’s officers would accept responsibility for the failure of the planning delegation scheme. The Leader suggested that all stakeholders wait for the conclusion of the PAS review.

Mr Richard Williams stated that the Council had put on apology on its website regarding a planning application in Steeple Morden. He explained that he lived

next door to the relevant property and asked for an explanation on how the application had been agreed, accompanied by a six-page document justifying it, when residents had supposedly been given up to 11 December to comment on it.

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning stated that the decision on Crafts Way, Steeple Morden should not have been issued and this was an unfortunate mistake. She explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had forced officers to work from home, which made it more difficult to get assistance. The decision would be quashed and safeguards had been introduced to avoid a repetition. The Council had written to the applicant and neighbours to explain the situation.

In his supplementary question Mr Williams asked why the six-page document justifying the decision had been written. The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that Mr Williams would have an opportunity to comment on the application after the decision was quashed.

**7. Petitions**

None received.

**8. To Consider the Following Recommendation:**

**8 (a) Community Governance Review of the parishes of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick (Civic Affairs Committee 3 November 2020)**

The Chair introduced this report. As local member, Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson thanked officers for their work and the Civic Affairs for its recommendation, which had the support of the affected parish councils. She urged Council to agree the proposal.

The Chair moved the proposal, which Councillor Heather Williams seconded. A vote was taken and by affirmation

**Council Agreed**

- A)** The creation of a new civil parish for Northstowe, as detailed in Option A of the report, with a variation to proposed boundaries:
  - i.** The adjacent field boundary, marking the perimeter of the Northstowe Extension Land should be the parish boundary between Northstowe and Longstanton, not the Over Road.
- B)** That the new administrative body be called “Northstowe Town Council”.
- C)** Elections to “Northstowe Town Council” be held in 2021 with councillors serving for a single year. All councillors to stand for a full four year term in 2022.
- D)** “Northstowe Town Council” should have 15 councillors.
- E)** Elections to Longstanton Parish Council and Willingham Parish Council take place in 2021 with councillors serving for a five year term.

- F)** Officers to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to seek re-alignment of district and county boundaries where these are affected by any changes made by this review.
- G)** The creation of a new polling district with boundaries to match the new parish boundary for Northstowe; amendment of existing polling district boundaries to match the new reduced size boundaries for Longstanton Civil Parish and Oakington & Westwick Civil Parish; the creation of a new polling district for the area north of the guided busway, which is to be moved to Willingham Civil Parish.

## **9. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority**

The Leader reported that whilst the Government had retained £45million of the £100million allocated for housing in the area, the Mayor expected these funds to be released. Unfortunately the authority was without a Chief Executive after the most qualified applicant for the position had received a more attractive offer. Lord Robert Mair had been appointed as Chair of the Cambridge Metro project.

Councillor Peter Fane reported that there had been a long discussion on climate changes and the Scrutiny Committee had recommended that the accounts of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) project be considered by the Board.

## **10. Greater Cambridge Partnership**

Councillor Neil Gough welcomed the approval of the Greenways project by the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board. He asked that Members encourage their residents to participate in the consultation on the Waterbeach action project.

Councillor Heather Williams reported that the Greater Cambridge Joint Assembly had approved a skills workshop. The Cambourne to Cambridge route had been discussed by the Assembly. The trees in Hardwick and the proximity of the route to Coton had resulted in mixed views.

## **11. Urgent Executive Decision**

The Monitoring Officer explained that due to the misreporting of a recommendation made by one parish council the decision had to be reissued as an urgent decision to meet the consultation deadline set by British Telecom, who had received the correct response.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart expressed his regret on the removal of phone boxes which many residents still relied on.

## **12. Questions From Councillors**

### **12 (a) From Councillor Dr Claire Daunton**

Does the Leader agree that this Council should positively encourage cycling as a means of active transportation within our villages?

The Deputy Leader (Statutory) agreed that the Council should be encouraging cycling, as it was a sustainable form of travel. He reminded Council that transport was the responsibility of the County Council, but this authority had worked with them to produce an active travel toolkit. Electric bikes had been licenced in Northstowe. The Council was also prioritising Zero Carbon Communities grants that fund cycling initiatives.

Councillor Claire Daunton asked what could be done to promote better infrastructure for cycling in the District's villages, as her supplementary question. The Deputy Leader (Statutory) agreed that improving infrastructure was vital to encourage cycling and the Greater Cambridge Partnership was looking at providing segregated routes along the A428 and was working with East West rail to help deliver this.

**12 (b) From Councillor Dr Richard Williams**

Can the Lead Member for Planning tell how many planning applications have the GCPS determined after their determination date, or have had extensions agreed in the last 18 months?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that in the last 18 months a total of 6,105 planning and other types of applications had been determined by the Council, 4,725 were determined in time or with an agreed extension of time with the applicant. These figures needed to be placed in context, as the service had suffered disruption as the result of the transition onto a single ICT platform and the restructure of the team. The team had successfully cleared the backlog of validations that had built up in the spring.

As his supplementary question, Councillor Dr Richard Williams asked if planning applications that needed to be redetermined could be reconsidered promptly. The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning agreed that these cases should be expedited as soon as possible.

**12 (c) From Councillor Grenville Chamberlain**

Can the Lead Member for Planning tell members how many planning applications in the last 12 months have external companies such as, but not exclusively, Terraquest been involved in?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that the Greater Cambridge Planning Service employed staff on short term contracts. Terraquest supported the processes of planning applications and had three people working with the application support team on validation and up to three planning officers working in the area teams. Over the last 12 months these Terraquest staff had validated 385 householder planning applications and processed 144 householder planning applications. Their work was supervised by the Area Team Leaders.

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain thanked the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning for her answer and as his supplementary question asked whether external organisations were required to share the Council's green to our core objective, including the need to preserve existing trees. The Lead Member for Planning explained that officers did ensure that the Council's core objectives were given priority when working with our partners.

**12 (d) From Councillor Mark Howell**

Will the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning agree to hold a meeting with all members of this council, to discuss and scrutinize the five-year housing land supply calculations?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that the Council published its five-year supply on its website on 1 April 2020. Members had been briefed on the supply position on 13 November 2019. The Council was now working with developers and other stakeholders to publish a new statement by 1 April 2021. Members would be briefed on this in 2021.

As his supplementary question, Mark Howell asked whether the meeting for Members to discuss the Five Year Land Supply would be held before or after May 2021. The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that no specific date had yet been set, but that she had monthly meetings with Councillor Nick Wright, who would be provided with updates on this issue.

**12 (e) From Councillor Sue Ellington**

Given that Mare Fen repairs cannot be started in winter because of the water level both within the drain and on the access to the bank, and given that according to the planning conditions for phase 2 of Northstowe which requires completion of the Mare Fen bank repairs before occupation of any phase 2 housing, can the Lead Member for Planning inform council of the implications for the SCDC 5 year land supply?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that works had been planned for this autumn 2020, but this has been delayed due to the boggy nature of the site. To get the repair works done required agreement between the Environment Agency who were the permitting authority, the landowner who were the County Council and the developer. It was estimated that work would start in early spring 2021. At present, Urban Splash were planning for first occupations on phase 2 in spring, between March and May 2021 depending on the market conditions. Approval had been given for 406 dwellings, which was part of the Council's five-year housing land supply. The Council considered that condition 22 had no implications for the Council's published position regarding the 5 year housing land supply for the district.

Councillor Ellington asked whether the sewage and outflow from Cambourne West would be processed through Uttons Drove, as this would have consequences for the future development at Northstowe. Councillor Tumi

Hawkins stated that she would provide Councillor Ellington with a written response to her supplementary question.

**12 (f) From Councillor Bunty Waters**

Will the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning confirm that there will be a full independent investigation into the status of the aquifer that has raised wide public concern in Longstanton, and confirm that all members of this council, will promptly receive the reports with the purpose of full transparency?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that Longstanton residents and the Parish Council had raised concerns about groundwater issues dating back to 2015, with the belief that this was due to the development on the aquifer. The current administration came to power in 2018 and had commissioned an independent investigation with the support of the local members and the Parish Council. This report by HR Wallingford would be shared with the Parish Council and all members when it is received.

Councillor Bunty Waters explained that flooding occurs in Bar Hill as well as Longstanton and she would be grateful to see the report.

**12 (g) From Councillor Nick Wright**

Marshalls of Cambridge has been one of the biggest employers in South Cambridgeshire for many years. Its move from our district is a loss not only of Cambridge airport, but a major innovator, a large manufacturer and the centre of a large cluster of supporting businesses. What has this administration done to try and find an alternative site close to Cambridge?

The Leader explained that she and the Joint Director of Planning had worked with Marshalls to keep their business in Cambridgeshire and had even raised the possibility of building a by-pass to make Duxford the favoured site. The Council was now working with stakeholders, including Cambridge City Council, to retain jobs in the county.

As his supplementary question Nick Wright asked whether the Leader had discussed the matter with the Mayor, the MP or the Government Minister. The Leader explained that this was a commercial decision and that from the outset Marshalls had identified three sites. She had spoken to the Mayor of the Combined Authority and with the Greater Cambridge Partnership about this matter. The priority now was to minimise job losses and promote future job growth.

**12 (h) From Councillor Heather Williams**

Will the Lead Member for Planning commit to implementing a policy within the Greater Cambridge Planning Service, where all Deemed Discharge Notices are to be published on the planning register and council website within 48hrs of having received the notice?

The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning explained that applicants submitted information in many different ways, including post and e-mail. The Council were considering ways of simplifying formal submissions.

As her supplementary question, Councillor Heather Williams asked when councillors could expect the Council to deliver within the 48 hour timescale. Councillor Williams also pointed out the Arrington Parish Council had still not been contacted on a planning matter, as agreed at the last Council meeting. The Lead Cabinet Member for Planning apologised that the Council had not contacted Arrington Parish Council and would ensure that this was resolved. She added that she would have to provide Councillor Williams with a written response after the meeting regarding her question on timelines.

### **13. Notices of Motion**

#### **13 (a) Standing in the Name of Councillor Pippa Heylings**

Councillor Pippa Heylings proposed the following motion, as laid out in the agenda:

“We are living through an unprecedented crisis that disrupts and challenges in nearly every aspect of our residents’ lives, be it social, economic, in health or environment. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the availability of local, good quality food. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the availability of local, good quality food. Cambridgeshire and the Fens are home to more than 50% of UK’s Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural land. British farmers are proud to produce food to some of the highest standards of animal welfare, environmental protection and food safety in the world. More than a million people signed the recent food standards campaign petition. Yet, the Agriculture Act 2020 still risks putting our farmers in an untenable situation whereby they will have to compete with food imports that have been produced using methods and products that would be illegal on British farms, leading to the sale of substandard food.

“The Back British Farming campaign sought to uphold and defend British food and farming standards through primary legislation but House of Lords amendments upholding this aim have been voted down by majorities in the House of Commons, including our own local MPs. As a far less robust concession to campaigners, the Government has placed the Trade and Agriculture Commission on a statutory footing, though without statutory powers. It is welcome news that MPs will have the chance to vote on the recommendation of the Commission in relation to any new trade deal but this alone does not give the strength of guarantee deserved of our farmers or our food security – and leaves British farming vulnerable to political convenience.

“This Council

- believes that guarantees to uphold British food and farming standards should be written into primary legislation

- authorises the Leader to contact our local MPs to underline the importance of having food and farming standards written into primary legislation.”

Councillor Pippa Heylings explained that she had accepted an amendment proposed by Councillor Nick Wright to include a reference to 3a agriculture land, so that the fourth sentence of the first paragraph reads “Cambridgeshire and the Fens are home to more than 50% of UK’s Grade 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural land.” Councillor Peter McDonald seconded the motion.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart expressed his support for the motion, as it would protect farming in the longer term and it was more sustainable to ensure lower food miles. The motion would also benefit consumers by allowing them to purchase produce directly from farms.

Councillor Nick Wright supported the motion and thanked Councillor Heylings for accepting his proposed amendment, as the majority of the farming land in the District was designated 3a. He asserted that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had restricted farming and its removal provided an opportunity. He reminded Council that he had declared an interest in this item and so would abstain on the vote.

Councillor Graham Cone expressed his support for the motion, as it was important that the farming industry competed on a level playing field with other nations.

Councillor Peter McDonald declared an interest as he carried out work within the agricultural industry.

Councillor Pippa Heylings stated that the Council should ask the District’s MPs to support enshrining food standards in law as part of the trade bill going through Parliament.

A vote was taken and by affirmation Council **agreed** the following motion:

We are living through an unprecedented crisis that disrupts and challenges in nearly every aspect of our residents’ lives, be it social, economic, in health or environment. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the availability of local, good quality food. Cambridgeshire and the Fens are home to more than 50% of UK’s Grade 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural land. British farmers are proud to produce food to some of the highest standards of animal welfare, environmental protection and food safety in the world. More than a million people signed the recent food standards campaign petition. Yet, the Agriculture Act 2020 still risks putting our farmers in an untenable situation whereby they will have to compete with food imports that have been produced using methods and products that would be illegal on British farms, leading to the sale of substandard food.

The Back British Farming campaign sought to uphold and defend British food and farming standards through primary legislation but House of Lords amendments upholding this aim have been voted down by majorities in the House of Commons, including our own local MPs. As a far less robust

concession to campaigners, the Government has placed the Trade and Agriculture Commission on a statutory footing, though without statutory powers. It is welcome news that MPs will have the chance to vote on the recommendation of the Commission in relation to any new trade deal but this alone does not give the strength of guarantee deserved of our farmers or our food security – and leaves British farming vulnerable to political convenience.

This Council

- believes that guarantees to uphold British food and farming standards should be written into primary legislation
- authorises the Leader to contact our local MPs to underline the importance of having food and farming standards written into primary legislation.

### **13 (b) Standing in the Name of Councillor Geoff Harvey**

Councillor Geoff Harvey proposed the following motion:

“Launching the recently published Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus, Jeremy Long, Chair of the Arc Local Enterprise Partnerships Group, said:

*“Our vision is for the Arc to be a global hub for innovation, and home to exemplary models of green development that will inspire communities around the world. The Arc’s place is at the forefront of the UK’s green recovery and this will be made possible through bold leadership that focuses on the big opportunities ..”*

“The prospectus itself reveals the extraordinary breadth and level of ambition. Prominent within this vision for future sustainable prosperity are green and seamless transport infrastructure and research into green energy technology, including nuclear fusion and advanced battery storage. Yet from our own local experience, we know that local electricity infrastructure is at capacity, leading to schemes facing restrictions in relation to green energy or facing additional costs and delays to enable grid reinforcement to take place. Considerable work is therefore underway in the Greater Cambridge area to address this issue as part of our work on developing planning policy, as well as considering the role of the public sector in facilitating the delivery of additional infrastructure, working in partnership with the district network operator. This work is taking into account the electrification of transport and heat.

“It is therefore concerning to note that the Prospectus does not explicitly mention energy infrastructure, which will be key to the Net-Zero ambition. The ambition for energy infrastructure should be equal at least to the ambition for transport infrastructure; the two are very much intertwined. Furthermore, a central government national infrastructure project of this scale offers unique opportunities to demand multi-agency cooperation; opportunities that may be grasped only once, or lost forever. For example, the electrified East-West Rail project could and should be under consideration as the first building block in a coherent energy infrastructure plan. For example, east-west HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) energy connectivity and storage might be installed along the track-side sufficient not only to power trains but also as a smart-grid or green

energy spine to link together the many green energy assets envisioned for the Arc in years to come; whilst development of specialist switchgear, solid state transformers, smartgrid management software and LVDC (low voltage direct current) distribution are all technology areas with export potential that can be part of a green recovery.

“In short, we need not only an Ox-Cam Arc but also an Ox-Cam Spark.

“This Council

- urges that green energy infrastructure, enabled by multi-agency cooperation, is considered at the earliest possible juncture in the Ox-Cam Arc national infrastructure project.

- requests the Leader and Chief Executive to raise the matter of timely consideration of energy infrastructure for the Ox-Cam Arc, within its political and governmental structures, as they deem appropriate.”

Councillor Geoff Harvey stated that the development proposed in the Ox-Cam Arc needed to focus more on the provision of sustainable energy and he hoped that Council would agree that this authority should liaise with the Government to ensure that the necessary multi-agency co-operation took place to put energy infrastructure in the development.

Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the motion.

The Leader expressed support for the motion which would allow her to continue to promote environmental initiatives in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

Councillor Heather Williams expressed her support for the motion that would help to combat climate change, which should not be a political issue.

Councillor Anna Bradnam expressed her support for the motion, but expressed concern that the power grid might prove to be insufficient.

Councillor Brian Milnes expressed his support for the motion, though he preferred AC, he recognised that it was a DC world.

Councillor Pippa Heylings congratulated both Councillor Harvey on his motion and the Leader for her efforts to ensure that renewable energy became a central part of the Oxford Cambridge arc development. There was a huge opportunity to address future energy needs and showcase technological innovation.

Councillor Harvey thanked Councillors for their comments, particularly the Leader of the Opposition for ensuring that there was cross party support for his motion.

A vote was taken and by affirmation Council **agreed** the following motion:

Launching the recently published Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus, Jeremy Long, Chair of the Arc Local Enterprise Partnerships Group, said:

*“Our vision is for the Arc to be a global hub for innovation, and home to exemplary models of green development that will inspire communities around the world. The Arc’s place is at the forefront of the UK’s green recovery and this will be made possible through bold leadership that focuses on the big opportunities ...”*

The prospectus itself reveals the extraordinary breadth and level of ambition. Prominent within this vision for future sustainable prosperity are green and seamless transport infrastructure and research into green energy technology, including nuclear fusion and advanced battery storage. Yet from our own local experience, we know that local electricity infrastructure is at capacity, leading to schemes facing restrictions in relation to green energy or facing additional costs and delays to enable grid reinforcement to take place. Considerable work is therefore underway in the Greater Cambridge area to address this issue as part of our work on developing planning policy, as well as considering the role of the public sector in facilitating the delivery of additional infrastructure, working in partnership with the district network operator. This work is taking into account the electrification of transport and heat.

It is therefore concerning to note that the Prospectus does not explicitly mention energy infrastructure, which will be key to the Net-Zero ambition. The ambition for energy infrastructure should be equal at least to the ambition for transport infrastructure; the two are very much intertwined. Furthermore, a central government national infrastructure project of this scale offers unique opportunities to demand multi-agency cooperation; opportunities that may be grasped only once, or lost forever. For example, the electrified East-West Rail project could and should be under consideration as the first building block in a coherent energy infrastructure plan. For example, east-west HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) energy connectivity and storage might be installed along the track-side sufficient not only to power trains but also as a smart-grid or green energy spine to link together the many green energy assets envisioned for the Arc in years to come; whilst development of specialist switchgear, solid state transformers, smartgrid management software and LVDC (low voltage direct current) distribution are all technology areas with export potential that can be part of a green recovery.

In short, we need not only an Ox-Cam Arc but also an Ox-Cam Spark.

This Council

- urges that green energy infrastructure, enabled by multi-agency cooperation, is considered at the earliest possible juncture in the Ox-Cam Arc national infrastructure project.
- requests the Leader and Chief Executive to raise the matter of timely consideration of energy infrastructure for the Ox-Cam Arc, within its political and governmental structures, as they deem appropriate.

**13 (c) Standing in the Name of Councillor Heather Williams**

Councillor Heather Williams proposed the following motion:

“This Council notes the outcome of the ‘First Conversation’ and ‘Call for Sites’ stages in the development of the next Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City. The Council records its thanks to officers involved in developing the next Local Plan and recognises the work being undertaken by officers to draw up a list of preferred sites.

“In light of the large number of sites put forward in the Call for Sites which affect almost every village/ town and community in our District, this Council calls for Parish and Town Councils to be offered the opportunity to comment on sites put forward for their area and for their views to be taken into account in the process of drawing up a list of preferred sites.”

Councillor Heather Williams accepted the following amendment to the motion: ~~This Council notes the outcome of the ‘First Conversation’ and ‘Call for Sites’ stages in the development of the next Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City.~~ **The Council records its thanks to officers involved in developing the next Local Plan and recognises the work being undertaken by officers to draw up a list of preferred sites support the selection of sites for the Preferred Option for the Local Plan, which will be published for full public consultation in 2021.**

In light of the large number of sites put forward in the Call for Sites which affect almost every village/ town and community in our District, this Council ~~calls for~~ **confirms that** Parish and Town Councils ~~to be~~ **will be** offered the opportunity to **feedback information and** comment on sites put forward for their area and ~~for their views to be taken into account in the process of drawing up a list of preferred sites~~ **that this input will be taken into consideration as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which will inform the site selection for the Preferred Option stage.**

Councillor Heather Williams expressed her appreciation for the work being carried out on the Local Plan. She requested that the Council provided parish councils with an opportunity to comment on sites before the preferred options were agreed.

Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer seconded the motion. He stated that residents wanted transparency and evidence in the Local Plan process. This meant that consultation should happen early in the process, with the District’s parish councils and other stakeholders.

Councillor Deborah Roberts supported the motion, as it would allow the parish councils in her ward to impart their local knowledge earlier in the process.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart supported the motion, which would allow local communities to comment on all sites, but he expressed concern that it was a joint Local Plan with the City Council, as this meant that the Council’s views could be diluted.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams welcomed the cross party support for the motion, as it ensured that parish councils could make their views known about all

potential sites. He thanked the Planning Department for their efforts to engage with parish councils.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins explained that the Council was making great efforts to engage with parish councils and an invitation had been sent to all of them to attend workshop next Wednesday. She asked Members to let her know if the invitation had not been received.

A vote was taken and by affirmation Council **agreed** the following motion:

The Council records its thanks to officers involved in developing the next Local Plan and recognises the work being undertaken by officers to support the selection of sites for the Preferred Option for the Local Plan, which will be published for full public consultation in 2021.

In light of the large number of sites put forward in the Call for Sites which affect almost every village/ town and community in our District, this Council confirms that Parish and Town Councils will be offered the opportunity to feedback information and comment on sites put forward for their area and that this input will be taken into consideration as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which will inform the site selection for the Preferred Option stage.

**13 (d) Standing in the Name of Councillor Ian Sollom**

Councillor Ian Sollom proposed the following motion, as laid out in the agenda:  
“The Council notes:

- That numbers of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) are rising fast. Nationally, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased across all schools from 13.6% in 2018, to 15.4% in 2019 and 17.3% at the beginning of 2020. In South Cambridgeshire District, over 2,400 pupils were eligible and claiming FSM at the beginning of September, up by over 25% from January 2019, and numbers continue to rise due to the impact of the pandemic.
- That every child who is entitled to Free School Meals is a sign of a family under significant financial pressure.
- That this picture of increasing child poverty is supported by the rapid rise in the number of families dependent on food banks. The Trussell Trust have reported the period of April to September to be the busiest half-year period for food banks in the network since the charity opened, and more than a third of their three-day emergency food parcels went to children. The Cambridge City Foodbank has reported a 23% increase in the number of people fed between March and July compared to last year, included a 28% increase in the number of children fed.
- That children who are hungry are less able to learn and thrive at school.
- That the extension of the school meals voucher scheme campaigned for by Marcus Rashford to cover the period of the summer holiday was incredibly important and valuable to families in food poverty.
- That the second lockdown and the continuing rise in unemployment are likely to lead to further increases in child poverty in the short term.

- That the economic consequences of the pandemic risks further increases in child poverty in the longer term.
- That moves by the government to extend support over the Christmas holiday period and throughout 2021 are a welcome start in addressing the problems of food poverty, but that more will need to be done to ensure no child in the UK goes hungry.

“This Council therefore supports the calls by the Child Food Poverty Task Force, supported by Marcus Rashford and many leading food suppliers and producers, which calls for:

- The expansion of free school meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That provision be made for food vouchers to cover school holidays and periods of lockdown for all families in receipt of Universal Credit or with low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That Healthy Start vouchers should be increased in value to £4.25 and expanded to be made available to all those in receipt of Universal Credit or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.

“This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the MPs representing the District in Parliament to call for additional government funding for:

1. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to every pupil whose parents or guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit.
2. Food vouchers or equivalent to be made available for every one of those pupils in every school holiday and during any period of lockdown.
3. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to pupils from low-income families whose parents or guardians have no recourse to public funds and destitute asylum seekers as defined in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Councillor Dr. Sollom accepted the following amendments to the penultimate bullet point:

- That provision be made for ~~food vouchers~~ **food and activities during to** ~~cover~~ school holidays and periods of lockdown ~~for~~ **to support** all families in receipt of Universal Credit **or equivalent**, or with low-income and no recourse to public funds.

And to paragraph 2:

2. ~~Food vouchers or e~~ **Equivalent food support** to be made available for every one of those pupils in every school holiday and during any period of lockdown.

Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the motion.

Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson supported the motion, as it aimed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the poorest in the District. She explained that half of the children in the new Northstowe Academy qualified for free school meals.

Councillor Gavin Clayton welcomed that motion, as 300 children qualified for free school meals in Cambourne. He expressed his concern regarding the lack of response from the District's MPs to Marcus Rashford's campaign. He particularly supported the proposal to extend free meals to those seeking asylum.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart supported the motion and hoped that its proposals could remain for the future, as it would ensure higher levels of nutrition for the most vulnerable children in the District.

Councillor Deborah Roberts stated that this was complex issue and that the family should be responsible for their children, not the Government, which had increased Universal Credit to £1,000.

Councillor Eileen Wilson supported the motion, as it was important that children had a balanced diet.

Councillor Bill Handley supported the motion, as one important measure in tackling the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Heather Williams supported the motion and thanked Councillor Dr. Sollom for agreeing the minor amendments,

Councillor Pippa Heylings thanked Councillor Dr. Sollom for proposing the motion and Councillor Heather Williams for ensuring cross-party support. She expressed surprise at the Government's decision not to support the provision of meals during the school holidays, as it cost a family three times as much it cost the Government to provide meals for children.

A vote was taken and with one abstention (Councillor Deborah Roberts) Council by affirmation **agreed** the following motion:

The Council notes:

- That numbers of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) are rising fast. Nationally, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased across all schools from 13.6% in 2018, to 15.4% in 2019 and 17.3% at the beginning of 2020. In South Cambridgeshire District, over 2,400 pupils were eligible and claiming FSM at the beginning of September, up by over 25% from January 2019, and numbers continue to rise due to the impact of the pandemic.
- That every child who is entitled to Free School Meals is a sign of a family under significant financial pressure.
- That this picture of increasing child poverty is supported by the rapid rise in the number of families dependent on food banks. The Trussell Trust have reported the period of April to September to be the busiest half-year period for food banks in the network since the charity opened, and more than a third of their three-day emergency food parcels went to children. The Cambridge City Foodbank has reported a 23% increase in the number of people fed between March and July compared to last year, included a 28% increase in the number of children fed.
- That children who are hungry are less able to learn and thrive at school.

- That the extension of the school meals voucher scheme campaigned for by Marcus Rashford to cover the period of the summer holiday was incredibly important and valuable to families in food poverty.
- That the second lockdown and the continuing rise in unemployment are likely to lead to further increases in child poverty in the short term.
- That the economic consequences of the pandemic risks further increases in child poverty in the longer term.
- That moves by the government to extend support over the Christmas holiday period and throughout 2021 are a welcome start in addressing the problems of food poverty, but that more will need to be done to ensure no child in the UK goes hungry.

This Council therefore supports the calls by the Child Food Poverty Task Force, supported by Marcus Rashford and many leading food suppliers and producers, which calls for:

- The expansion of free school meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That provision be made for food and activities during school holidays and periods of lockdown to support all families in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That Healthy Start vouchers should be increased in value to £4.25 and expanded to be made available to all those in receipt of Universal Credit or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the MPs representing the District in Parliament to call for additional government funding for:

1. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to every pupil whose parents or guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit.
2. Equivalent food support to be made available for every one of those pupils in every school holiday and during any period of lockdown.
3. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to pupils from low-income families whose parents or guardians have no recourse to public funds and destitute asylum seekers as defined in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

#### 14. **Chair's Engagements**

Council **noted** the Chair's engagement.

Council **agreed** that its next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 February 2020 at 2pm, instead of Thursday 11 February 2020 at 2pm.

---

**The Meeting ended at 4.15 p.m.**

---