

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Tuesday, 18 January 2022 at 5.20 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chair  
Councillor Steve Hunt – Vice-Chair of the meeting

**Councillors:** Anna Bradnam  
Graham Cone  
Peter Fane  
Sally Ann Hart  
Dr. Richard Williams  
Dr. Martin Cahn  
Dr. Claire Daunton  
Jose Hales (substitute)  
Alex Malyon (substitute)

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Anne Ainsworth (Chief Operating Officer), Gareth Bell (Communications Manager), Peter Campbell (Head of Housing), Bode Esan (Head of Climate, Environment & Waste), Jeff Membery (Head of Transformation), Ian Senior (Scrutiny and Governance Adviser) and Liz Watts (Chief Executive)

Councillors Neil Gough, Bridget Smith, and John Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Cllr Nigel Cathcart (Committee member), Cllr Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer (Committee member), Cllr Dr. Tumi Hawkins, and Cllr Peter McDonald were in attendance remotely.

### **1. Chair's announcements**

The Chair made several brief housekeeping announcements.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Councillors Sarah Cheung Johnson, Geoff Harvey and Judith Rippeth sent apologies.

In the absence of Councillor Rippeth, the Committee affirmed the appointment of Councillor Steve Hunt as Vice-Chair of the meeting.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

In respect of Minute 6 (Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire)

- Councillor Neil Gough (Deputy Leader) declared non-pecuniary interests as Vice-Chair of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council.
- Councillor Peter McDonald (Lead Cabinet Member for Business Recovery) declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chair of the Highways Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council.

#### 4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee authorised the Chair to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2021.

Reference was made to some repetition of text in the appendix to those minutes.

#### 5. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

#### 6. **Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a draft report to Cabinet outlining initial discussions between South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) aimed at tackling illegal and inconsiderate parking in South Cambridgeshire.

Several Members specifically welcomed the proposal, and Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton highlighted how helpful it would be in encouraging more considerate car parking outside schools. Councillor Daunton noted that this was a tri-partite initiative and emphasised the importance of identifying which of the three partners ultimately would provide scrutiny of the scheme. In response, Councillor Neil Gough (Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport, and Transformation & Projects) highlighted the significant level of partnership working so far and said that Cambridgeshire County Council was accountable for implementation.

Councillor Gough explained that the need for enforcement would be informed by experience gathered during Year 1 of the scheme. Committee members noted that the level of penalty notices issued in an area was likely to remain relatively stable.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams anticipated that civil parking enforcement would find significant support among residents of South Cambridgeshire. In response to his question about the reporting route, Councillor Gough said that South Cambridgeshire District Council would receive reports specific to its administrative area.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart queried how inconsiderate parking would be managed. Officers explained to the Committee that South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council were exploring whether a letter or other means of conveying information could be placed on the windscreens of vehicles that were parked in an inconsiderate manner though not illegally. If this was deemed realistic then information would be issued by agents when such inconsiderate parking was spotted while enforcement action was being undertaken in relation to another matter in the vicinity.

In response to Councillor Anna Bradnam's question as to whether there were sufficient resources for a CPE scheme to operate effectively in a rural area like South Cambridgeshire, Councillor Gough expressed the aspiration that a small amount of enforcement might change car parking behaviour for the better generally. Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn shared the concern about resources and accepted that, while civil parking enforcement would improve the situation, it would not completely solve the problem of inconsiderate parking.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **welcomed and supported** the recommendation

that Cabinet support an application by Cambridgeshire County Council to the Department for Transport (Daft) to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) across South Cambridgeshire and grant delegated authority to the Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport and Transformation & Projects, to provide feedback on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council to the application for CPE to the Department for Transport and the Funding Agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council and the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

## 7. Council's Business Plan

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered an updated, but still draft, version of the Business Plan for 2022-25, intended to provide clear priorities and delivery dates and make sure the Council could easily track progress and delivery of the agreed actions.

In connection with Action C2 (Work with partners to protect and enhance the environment with the aim of doubling nature), Councillor Anna Bradnam suggested that the 'Six Free Trees' initiative might usefully be extended to allow the planting of trees on private land. In reply, Councillor Neil Gough (Deputy Leader) commented that there had been an extraordinarily enthusiastic response from Parish Councils. Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of the Council) confirmed that the scheme was not intended to be exclusive to Parish Councils or land owned by Parish Councils.

With reference to Action B3 (Liaison meetings and forums), Councillors Dr. Claire Daunton and Grenville Chamberlain supported the idea of creating more such bodies as a way of engaging with those residents most affected by significant new developments.

Councillor Peter Fane suggested that energy costs should be considered in assessing the affordability of homes.

Councillor Graham Cone supported ongoing initiatives to tackle fly-tipping and to expand the network of publicly available electric vehicle charging points.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart hoped that more attention could be given to conservation matters and measures to enhance local high streets.

Following further discussion, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported** the proposed draft 2020-25 Business Plan (with the Action Plan primarily focused on delivery 2022-23).

## 8. General Fund Budget

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2022-2023.

The Chair and others thanked the Head of Finance and his team for the helpful and clear way in which this complex subject had been presented, and accepted that, nevertheless, it represented work in progress.

The Chair expressed concern at the increased cost of providing pensions.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported recommendations (a) to (k)** set out in paragraph 3 of the draft report to the Cabinet meeting on 7 February 2022.

## 9. Housing Revenue Account Budget

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered the summary Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Budget for 2022-2023.

Councillor Anna Bradnam urged South Cambridgeshire District Council to be clear about who it was selling self-build plots to so that plots were not being acquired by commercial developers.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart expressed concern about the disparity between Council House rent levels and rent levels charged by Housing Associations. Committee members noted that the former were social rents while the latter were affordable rents defined as being 80% of the market rate.

Where vacant garages were being considered for demolition, Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton hoped that consideration would be given to building social housing there instead.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported the recommendations** set out in paragraph 3 of the draft report to the Cabinet meeting on 7 February 2022.

## 10. Treasury Management

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a report on the annual review of the Treasury Management Strategy

Referring to Appendix A to the report and, specifically, to paragraph 12.1 section F, the Chair remarked that the pie chart demonstrating inflation risk was difficult to interpret, and should either be made more legible, or removed from the final document.

Councillor Graham Cone sought clarity of paragraph 10.1 of the strategy. The Head of Finance explained how the receipt of 'Covid Grant' up front had influenced the figures.

At paragraph 10.2, Councillor Anna Bradnam welcomed the fact that South Cambridgeshire District Council's objective when investing money was to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, thus minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams wanted to know whether yield could be maintained should inflation rise significantly. The Head of Finance said that the Council had no option but to rely on the financial market and that, at present and realistically, it would not be possible to protect yield levels from the effect of sustained high inflation.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported the recommendations** set out in the draft report to the Cabinet meeting on 7 February 2022.

## 11. Capital Strategy

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a report on the annual review of the Capital Strategy.

Referring to the Capital Strategy 2022, Councillor Anna Bradnam noted the projected levels of South Cambridgeshire District Council's total outstanding debt (which comprised borrowing and lease liabilities) compared with the Capital Financing Requirement as shown in Annex A Prudential Indicator 3: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing

Requirement. Debt remained below the Capital Financing Requirement as required by statutory guidance.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported the recommendations** set out in the draft report to the Cabinet meeting on 7 February 2022.

**12. Work Programme**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee **received and noted** its work programme for 2021-2022.

**13. To Note the Date of the next meeting**

Members noted that the next Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting would be on Thursday 3 March 2022 at 5.20pm.

---

**The Meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.**

---