

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 21 July 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair
Councillor Peter Fane – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Michael Atkins, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Sarah Cheung Johnson, Graham Cone, Stephen Drew, Sue Ellington, Jose Hales, Bill Handley, Sunita Hansraj, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Pippa Heylings, James Hobro, Carla Hofman, Mark Howell, Helene Leeming, Daniel Lentell, Alex Malyon, Brian Milnes, Lina Nieto, Dr Lisa Redrup, Judith Rippeth, Peter Sandford, Bridget Smith, Susan van de Ven, Buntly Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams and Dr. Richard Williams

Councillors Cllr Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins, Cllr Dr John Loveluck and Cllr Richard Stobart were in attendance remotely.

Officers:	Rebecca Dobson	Democratic Services Manager
	Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

Councillors Cllr Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins, Cllr Dr John Loveluck and Cllr Richard Stobart were in attendance remotely.

1. Apologies

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Libby Earl, Corinne Garvie and Peter McDonald. Councillors Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Dr Tumi Hawkins, John Loveluck and Richard Stobart attended the meeting online.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Henry Batchelor declared an interest as a member of the Investment Partnerships.

3. Register of Interests

Members were reminded to 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 26 May were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Adding Cllr Sue Ellington to the list of members on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, in place of Cllr Dr Richard Williams who remained a substitute, in minute 11.
- The inclusion of the word “Sir” before the name David Amess MP in minute 18.

5. Announcements

Councillor Susan van de Ven expressed her sadness at the death of Robin Martlew who had been Councillor for Caldecote from 2004 to 2010. She remembered his sense of humour and his dedication as a District Councillor. Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins stated that she was grateful to Robin Martlew for his guidance on how to serve the residents of the Caldecote ward.

6. Questions From the Public

6 (a) From Cambridge City Councillor Hannah Copley

Cambridge City Councillor Hannah Copley asked the following question:

Following Royal Assent of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (now the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022), what specific steps will South Cambridgeshire District Council take to counteract, and prevent contributing to, the systemic racism that this act represents?

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, recognised that part 4 of the Act could be used by Police to remove unauthorised encampments, in potential breach of the Council's equality policy, but this was only relevant to this authority if the Council was the landowner. He stated that unauthorised encampments could be avoided if more Traveller sites were provided. The Council operated two sites within the District and was working with both the County Council and the City Council to identify more sites in the Greater Cambridge area. District Councillors and Parish Councillors had recently undergone training in Traveller awareness, which included the use of negotiating stopping sites which could avoid the need for enforcement action. The Accommodation Needs Assessment would help to identify possible Traveller sites and would inform the Local Plan.

Cambridge City Councillor Hannah Copley asked the following as a supplementary question:

“How many evictions of the members of the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities have taken place since July 2021 that South Cambridgeshire District Council has been aware of (whether the eviction has been carried out by South Cambridgeshire District Council, a Parish Council, the County Council, a private landowner or any other body), and could you provide the total number of known evictions based on who carried out the eviction?”

Councillor John Batchelor replied that the Council had not carried out any evictions of Travellers since July 2021. He added that Parish Councils and

private landowners were separate entities and had no obligation to report evictions to this authority. They would have to be contacted individually to ascertain this information.

7. Petitions

None.

8. To Consider the Following Recommendation:

8 (a) Northstowe - Update and Recommendations (Cabinet, 11 July 2022)

The Chair explained that certain appendices to the report contained commercially sensitive information and whilst her preference was to remain in open session, if councillors wished to refer to the sensitive information, then the meeting would need to vote to exclude the press and public from that discussion.

Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities, presented this report that recommended the provision of community buildings, development of the Enterprise Zone and funding, including the Section 106 shortfalls, at Northstowe. He explained that there was a typographical error in the third recommendation and the figure needed to be amended to £4.82m.

Councillor Heather Williams requested that recommendation ix be amended to include a recommendation that a report come back to Council in six months' time regarding the Enterprise Zone development. Councillor Bill Handley accepted this amendment, which was agreed without debate.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that there was cross party support for the provision of community facilities at Northstowe but she wanted assurances that the large sums of money were being well spent and that a thriving Enterprise Zone would be established, unlike in Cambourne where houses were being built on the Business Park. The Chief Executive replied that the terms of sale prohibited the building of housing on the Northstowe Enterprise Zone until 2042.

Councillor Daniel Lentell said that Northstowe was a diverse and vibrant new community, which would be well served by the proposals in the report. Councillor Judith Rippeth supported the recommendations in the report and praised the high sustainability rating of the proposed buildings at Northstowe.

Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson explained that she and the other local member Councillor Alex Malyon supported the recommendations in the report and were looking forward to residents benefitting from these new community buildings.

Councillor Sue Ellington expressed concern that land set aside for a faith building was not part of the current plans. Councillor Bill Handley replied that there was land set aside for a faith building but this was for a later stage of the development. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

confirmed that a burial ground was part of Northstowe's infrastructure requirements.

Councillor Lina Nieto asked whether businesses would be adversely affected by the delay. Councillor Bill Handley assured Council that there would be a positive impact on businesses, as, if agreed, the recommendations would result in the building of facilities that they would use.

Councillor Bridget Smith stated that Northstowe had excellent infrastructure but needed the community facilities promised in the report, the provision of which would provide an exemplar for future developments on Bourn airfield and Waterbeach. She thanked officers for their work.

The recommendations, as amended, were proposed by Councillor Bill Handley and seconded by Councillor Bridget Smith. A vote was taken and by affirmation

Council **agreed** to

- I. Approve additional funding for the Phase 1 community buildings of:
 - a. £1.53m for the Sports Pavilion (including an allocation of £300k from the Renewable Energy Reserve)
 - b. £6.5m for the Community Building funded from Capital Receipts.
- II. Approve an amendment to the Capital Programme to increase the allocation by £1.38m for the Phase 2 Civic Hub funded by the s106 to reflect the total allocation after indexation.
- III. Approve an additional £4.82m allocated to the Civic Hub programme funded from Capital Receipts.
- IV. Note that the Phase 2 Sports Pavilion is likely to be underfunded, but that delivery is not expected until 18 months after the 500th occupation on Phase 2. Although an exact amount cannot be estimated at this time, it is proposed an additional allocation of £2m be made in the General Fund Capital Programme, funded from Capital Receipts, for this project.
- V. Create a further provision of £433,000 (£219,000 plus indexation) for the Phase 1 Section 106 shortfall.
- VI. Create a provision for Phase 2 Section 106 commitments of £1.6m
- VII. Request that officers undertake a further review of infrastructure prioritisation in the S106 agreement for phase 2 in light of this report and report the matter back to the Planning Committee for consideration.
- VIII. Agree to the Community Centre and Local Centre being built on Parcel 6 via a Direct Delivery or Development Manager model.

- IX. Pause the wider Enterprise Zone development (on Parcels 1,2, 3 and 4) for an initial period of 12 months. A report to come back to Council in six months' time.
- X. Agree the approach to Parcel 5 taking into account the option agreement set out in the exempt section of this report

9. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority**

In response to questioning from Councillor Heather Williams, Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the extraordinary meeting of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Board was split over two separate days. Councillor John Williams attended as substitute for the first day and therefore only he could attend the second day continuation, although Councillor Bridget Smith attended as an observer who could not vote on the second day.

The Chief Executive explained that the discussion on the terms agreed with the outgoing Chief Executive of the Combined Authority were held in confidential session. She noted that the figures would be published in the Combined Authority's Statement of Accounts in the relevant year but that it was not appropriate to discuss any detail in this meeting. Councillor Bridget Smith assured Council that she was confident that the new Chief Executive would be able to address any outstanding staffing issues.

The Chief Executive explained that the welfare of officers had been raised as an issue due to the changes at a senior level at the Combined Authority. The Chief Executives of the county's local authorities were providing support to the Combined Authority and its staff.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams stated that a letter from the auditors EY dated 1 June 2022 raised significant concerns regarding the capacity of the Combined Authority to perform its duties. He added that the Combined Authority had repaid £10m of funding from Government to promote home insulation as it had been unable to spend the money and it had only managed to secure £600,000 for transport improvement funding, which compared unfavourably to millions secured by other combined authorities. Councillor Bridget Smith shared Councillor Dr Richard Williams' frustration with regards to the lack of transport funding secured but noted that difficulties with the home insulation had been nationwide, partly caused by a complicated Government scheme and a lack of providers. Locally the provider had pulled out of the scheme but an extension had been secured up to 30 September. Councillor Bridget Smith further explained that issues with home insulation originated with the previous Mayor and she was confident that matters would improve with the Combined Authority working in partnership with the other Cambridgeshire local authorities.

Council **noted** the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority report.

The Chair explained that she had allowed the report on the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership to be added to the agenda as a supplementary item to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority item. Council

noted the report.

10. Members of Committees and Outside Bodies

On the proposal of Councillor Anna Bradnam, which was seconded by Councillor John Williams, Council **agreed** to appoint Councillor Richard Stobart as the Council's Board Member on both the South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership LLP and the South Cambridgeshire Projects LLP.

On the proposal of Councillor Bridget Smith, which was seconded by Councillor John Batchelor, Council **agreed** to appoint Councillor Jose Hales to the Housing Engagement Board. On the proposal of Councillor Heather Williams, which was seconded by Councillor Graham Cone, Council **agreed** to appoint Councillor Mark Howell to the Housing Engagement Board.

On the proposal of Councillor Bridget Smith, which was seconded Councillor Judith Rippeth, Council **agreed** to appoint Councillor Helene Leeming as the Liberal Democrat Substitute member on the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel.

Council **noted** that Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer had replaced Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson as substitute on the Employment and Staffing Committee.

11. Questions From Councillors

11 (a) From Councillor Helene Leeming

What is the Council currently doing to support Ukrainian refugees?

Councillor Bill Handley explained that the Council had the highest number of visas for any District authority in the country. This had been a large logistical exercise across the Council to undertake the numerous checks required under the Government scheme and further involving the issuing of free bus passes and the provision of 150 free bikes to Ukrainian guests. He praised the work of officers and was proud of their efforts.

In response to Councillor Leeming's supplementary question, Councillor Handley explained that the Council was working with the Local Government Association to seek clarity from the Government regarding the possible continuation of the Scheme. A survey had been sent out to those hosting Ukrainian refugees to assess the scale of the challenge.

11 (b) From Councillor Stephen Drew

In what ways is South Cambridgeshire District Council promoting local markets across the District?

Councillor Bill Handley explained that there were currently 10 community markets

in the District and the Council had positive relations with them. A market toolkit had been put on the Council's website.

In response to Councillor Drew's supplementary question, Councillor Handley stated that he recognised the importance of local markets to the District's residents and the Council was working with Cambridgeshire ACRE to identify venues. It was hoped that regular markets would be established at Northstowe in the autumn.

11 (c) From Councillor Dr Richard Williams

Can the Leader explain to the residents and communities who would be severely and detrimentally impacted by the proposed new line, her decision to sign a letter backing East West Rail?

Councillor Bridget Smith read a statement from the Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats:

"The Liberal Democrats in Cambridgeshire have been lobbying for the reinstatement of an East-West rail link for 50 years. The only thing that has changed in that time is the urgency with which we need to give people viable alternatives to the car in order to cut journey times, reduce our very high carbon emissions and help people with the escalating cost of living. East-West rail is a Government scheme being delivered by a private company resulting in poor accountability and very little transparency and it's been an enormous frustration that the Government has kept residents completely in the dark for years about their intentions. This is a pitiful way of delivering a major piece of public transport infrastructure. The two recent letters signed by all local council leaders, the universities and key business organisations to the Secretary of State and to the Chancellor were intended to pressure the Government to come clean and make its position clear, so that we can start to plan for a low carbon, low cost of living future for our region. We made it absolutely clear before May's election that we support the principle of a rail link and a station serving Cambourne because it is only by providing really good quality public transport that we enable all people to travel easily to work, to have equal access to opportunities to reduce the reliance on cars, reduce the consequential air pollution, reduce carbon emissions, reduce the congestion and the increased cost of living. Cambourne was built without any associated public transport infrastructure and residents will benefit hugely when this deficit is addressed. However, we are reserving judgement on the final route alignment and the location of the station because we do have grave concerns about the environmental impact of the whole scheme and especially the impact on villages close to a new station along the route and additionally, we believe a new station must be readily accessible by cycle or by foot for the majority of residents of Cambourne and the surrounding villages. Furthermore, it's absolutely essential that a railway line fit for the twenty-first century is electrified and the Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats will continue to campaign for that."

Councillor Dr Richard Williams stated that the letter sent to the Chancellor referred to Cambridge's growth but not the impact the line would have on the District's villages and the residents' concerns. He asked how the Leader could sign a letter supporting a scheme that did not have a published business case

and that residents had not been consulted on.

Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the Government had proposed this scheme to generate growth. The local councils, universities and businesses needed clarity from the Government on whether it would fund an East-West rail line and invest in the region. This was the purpose of the letter. Until this was provided there was little point in further discussion. Councillor Smith confirmed that she did have concerns regarding the possible impact on the District's villages but the letter had to be concise and so not mention this.

11 (d) From Councillor Dr Lisa Redrup

What are the revised savings from greening South Cambridgeshire Hall?

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that the increase in utility prices had reduced the time it would take for the project to pay for itself from 20 to 10 years.

In response to Councillor Dr Redrup's supplementary question, Councillor Milnes explained that the greening of South Cambridgeshire Hall was just one of several initiatives recently introduced by the Council, which included the provision of electric refuse vehicles and the decision to construct a solar panel array to power these vehicles at Waterbeach depot.

11 (e) From Councillor Daniel Lentell

What can my constituents in Over and Willingham expect in terms of tangible benefits following the appointment of a new, interim chief executive of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority?

Councillor Bridget Smith explained that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was required to secure funding from the Government for improvements in transport and meeting the zero carbon targets. Councillor Daniel Lentell did not have a supplementary question.

11 (f) From Councillor Richard Stobart

Could the Leader please comment on the Council Tax collection rates for 2021-22, bearing in mind the very difficult economic circumstances?

Councillor John Williams reported that the Council had achieved the second highest collection rate for Council Tax in the country, despite the increase in the cost of living. He requested that if residents who were having difficulty in paying they should contact the Council as soon as possible.

Councillor Richard Stobart asked what measures were in place to assist those residents who were struggling to pay their Council Tax bill. Councillor John Williams explained that this year's budget included the funding of two posts to assist residents with the paying of Council Tax and other bills. It was recognised that it would be a very difficult year financially for many who lived in the District.

12. Notices of Motion

12 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor Heather Williams

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the following motion:

South Cambs is a major growth area. We know that many of these new homes will attract young families and the number of young people in the District will rise. It is therefore hugely important that the voice of young people is heard in the development of the Council's policies for the future of the District. This Council encourages youth engagement in local politics and supports the greater involvement of young people in decision-making at the Council and requests Cabinet to establish a cross-party Members' Task & Finish Group to consider options for delivering this.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that the Council had rejected a similar motion in 2019.

Councillor Stephen Drew explained that Cambourne had a high proportion of young people and he welcomed the construction of the Soul building with Section 106 funding. He expressed concern about the average age of parish councillors and he supported the motion.

Councillor Sue Ellington reported that she had set up a youth council when she had been on Cabinet and a number of schools had participated. She supported the motion and hoped that the Council would get the views of young people on issues such as the new development at Northstowe.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that the Planning team had a youth engagement programme, which had informed development at Cottenham, Foxton and the Science Park. She supported the motion.

Councillor Pippa Heylings reported that children from the Cambridge Schools Eco Council had addressed a meeting of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, speaking for a minute each. She supported the motion.

Councillor Bill Handley spoke in favour of the motion and as the Lead Cabinet Member for Communities he looked forward to discussing the matter with the Communications and Sustainable Communities Service Manager.

Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson welcomed the fact that more younger people had been elected as Members of the Council. She recognised that the number of youth workers had been cut and that there was a lack of leisure facilities for young people. She supported the motion.

Councillor Henry Batchelor explained that when he was first elected he experienced a steep learning curve and he welcomed any proposal that would make it easier for younger people to take public office.

Councillor Brian Milnes supported the motion and he looked forward to the day when Council would debate a motion proposed by a youth council.

Councillor Anna Bradnam explained that she had been involved with a County Council group that encouraged children in care to express their views.

Councillor Graham Cone welcomed the cross party support for the motion and endorsed the comments made.

Councillor Heather Williams welcomed the comments made and hoped that Cabinet would be able to allocate funding to the project.

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

South Cambs is a major growth area. We know that many of these new homes will attract young families and the number of young people in the District will rise. It is therefore hugely important that the voice of young people is heard in the development of the Council's policies for the future of the District. This Council encourages youth engagement in local politics and supports the greater involvement of young people in decision-making at the Council and requests Cabinet to establish a cross-party Members' Task & Finish Group to consider options for delivering this.

13. Chair's Engagements

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

14. Date of Next Meeting

Council **noted** that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 22 September at 2 pm.

The Meeting ended at 3.53 p.m.
