

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 30 March 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: Michael Atkins, John Batchelor, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Dr. Martin Cahn, Graham Cone, Stephen Drew, Sue Ellington, Bill Handley, Sunita Hansraj, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, James Hobro, Carla Hofman, Mark Howell, Helene Leeming, Daniel Lentell, Brian Milnes, Annika Osborne, Dr Lisa Redrup, Judith Rippeth, Peter Sandford, Richard Stobart, Dr Susan van de Ven, Natalie Warren-Green, Bunty Waters, Heather Williams, John Williams and Dr. Richard Williams

Officers:	Andrew Francis	Elections and Democratic Services Manager
	Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
	Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

1. Apologies

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Henry Batchelor, Paul Bearpark, Ariel Cahn, Libby Earle, Corinne Garvie, Jose Hales, William Jackson-Wood, Peter McDonald, Lina Nieto, Bridget Smith and Dr Aidan Van de Weyer.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Peter Fane declared a registerable interest as a director of Shire Homes, which was funded by the HRA.

Councillor Dr James Hobro declared a registerable interest in agenda item 9c Investment Strategy, as a non-executive director of South Cambs Limited, trading as Ermine Street Housing. He left the room whilst this item was discussed and he did not participate in the debate or vote.

Councillor Helene Leeming declared a registerable interest in agenda item 10, Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, as it made several reference to her employer, the Wildlife Trust.

Councillor Peter Sandford declared a registerable interest in agenda item 9c Investment Strategy, as a non-executive director of South Cambs Limited, trading as Ermine Street Housing. He left the room whilst this item was discussed and he did not participate in the debate or vote.

Councillor Richard Stobart declared registerable interests in agenda item 9c Investment Strategy, as a Director of the South Cambridgeshire Investment

Partnership and a Director of South Cambs Projects. He left the room during this item and he did not participate in the debate or vote.

Councillor Heather Williams declared a registerable interest in agenda item 13 Greater Cambridge Partnership, as a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

3. Register of Interests

The Chair reminded members that they should 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 21 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- In the last sentence of agenda item 6, the word "Arc" was amended to "Pan Regional Partnership".
- In the second sentence of agenda item 8(a), the figure "£6m" was amended to "£7m".
- The end of the last sentence of the first paragraph of minute 8(e) was amended to read "any investments made would be with banks that would not default."
- The start of the second paragraph of minute 8(j) was amended to read "Councillor Heather Williams reminded Council that the Conservative Group had proposed an amendment that would have frozen rent at September's Council meeting."
- In the last sentence of the second paragraph of minute 11, the word "equate" was removed.
- In the second sentence of the fifth paragraph of minute 11, the word "only" was amended to "on".
- The twelfth paragraph of minute 18(a) was amended to read "The Chair applauded the motion and thanked councillors for helping her to facilitate the debate."

The Chair stated that written answers to questions from Councillors, which had not been answered at the last Council meeting, were included as an appendix to the minutes.

5. Announcements

The Chair announced that she had raised £1,012.77 for her charity The Trussell Trust. She thanked all those who had contributed.

6. Questions From the Public

It was agreed that the public statement from Ron Ward, facilitator of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, should be heard at the start of the discussion of agenda item 10, the Making of Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Petitions

There were no petitions.

8. Result of Cottenham Ward By-election

The Chief Executive reported that a by-election had been held for the Cottenham ward on 16 March 2023 and Councillor Eileen Wilson had been elected. The Chair congratulated Councillor Wilson and welcomed her back to the Council.

9. To Consider the Following Recommendation:**9 (a) Pay Policy Statement (Employment Committee, 23 February)**

Councillor John Williams presented this annual report noting that the Council was obliged to agree it under the Localism Act 2011. He was pleased to announce that the authority had paid a minimum wage of £11, which was more than the real living wage that had been declared by the Living Wage Foundation in the autumn. He explained that the ratio between the lowest and highest paid was less than 1:8 and that the mean hourly rate between women and men was 10.51% in favour of women. Councillor Pippa Heylings expressed her pride in the fact that the Council was paying all its staff more than the national real living wage and in the fact that the authority had so many women in senior management positions.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Pippa Heylings seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation

Council

Agreed to approve the updated Pay Policy Statement as required by the Localism Act 2011.

9 (b) Assistants for Political Groups (Civic Affairs Committee on 2 March 2023)

The Chair, as Chair of the Civic Affairs Committee, presented this report, which included a recommendation from that Committee that the Constitution be amended to allow for the appointment of political assistants.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Graham Cone seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (31):

Councillors Michael Atkins, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Tom Bygott, Dr Martin Cahn, Graham Cone, Stephen Drew, Sue Ellington, Peter Fane, Bill Handley, Sunita Hansraj, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Dr Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Dr James Hobro, Carla Hofman, Mark Howell, Helene Leeming, Brian Milnes, Annika Osborne, Dr Lisa Redrup, Judith Rippeth, Peter Sandford, Richard Stobart, Dr Susan van de Ven, Natalie Warren-Green, Bunty Waters,

Heather Williams, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Against (2):

Councillors Daniel Lentell and Dr Richard Williams.

Abstain (0)

Council

Agreed to amend the Constitution to allow for the appointment of Political Assistants and to authorise the Chief Executive to make the necessary changes to the Constitution.

9 (c) Investment Strategy (Cabinet, 20 March 2023)

Councillor John Williams introduced this report, which recommended that Council agree a refreshed version of the Investment Strategy. He explained that the Council could no longer secure loans from the Public Works Loan Board for investment purposes. It was projected that the Council's investments would return a yield of £7m, which would help the authority deliver frontline services.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that she was not opposed to commercial investments and she reminded Council that Ermine Street Housing Limited had been set up by a Conservative administration. She had proposed an amendment back in 2019 expressing concern about the level of borrowing required to make investments. In 2019 the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee had been sufficiently concerned to discuss the Council's Investment Strategy. Councillor Michael Atkins, Chair of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, supported a report coming to that Committee on the Investment Strategy, providing the focus was not on the decision-making process, as this was the responsibility of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. Councillor John Williams suggested that the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee was the appropriate body to review the results of the Investment Strategy, whilst the Scrutiny and Overview Committee focussed on the pre-scrutiny of decisions that had not yet been agreed. Councillor Heather Williams explained that this is what had occurred in 2019.

Councillor Michael Atkins queried the text in paragraph 8.4.3. that included reference to a ratio that appeared unrelated to the accompanying table. The Head of Finance explained that the table showed the actual interest payment it was assumed the Council would make, whilst the paragraph below indicated how the figures were calculated. For 2023/24 an interest rate of 4.75% was expected, whilst by 2025/26 the expected rate had dropped to 3.5%.

Councillor Brian Milnes expressed his support for this and previous Investment Strategies, which had ensured an impressive return since 2018.

Councillor John Williams proposed and Councillor Brian Milnes seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (23):

Councillors Michael Atkins, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Dr Martin Cahn, Stephen Drew, Peter Fane, Bill Handley, Sunita Hansraj, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Carla Hofman, Helene Leeming, Daniel Lentell, Brian Milnes, Annika Osborne, Dr Lisa Redrup, Judith Rippeth, Dr Susan van de Ven, Natalie Warren-Green, John Williams and Eileen Wilson.

Against (6):

Councillors Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Bunty Waters, Dr Richard Williams and Heather Williams.

Abstain (0)

Council

Agreed to approve the updated Investment Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report.

10. Making of Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan

Ron Ward, the facilitator of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, explained that unfortunately Mary Drage, Chair of Fulbourn Parish Council, could not be present at the meeting.

Ron Ward stated that Fulbourn was a historic village, that dated back to Roman times. Many of the buildings constructed between the 14th and 18th century were still standing, including the pub and St Vigors Church. Fulbourn was expected to grow from a population of 5,000 to 6,000 by 2031. There were currently 4,500 jobs in the village.

Ron Ward explained that the Neighbourhood Plan had taken five years to create and he thanked the volunteers from the village who had carried out the work. He also thanked the officers of the Council who had supported the process and the Parish Council, which had contributed time, effort and funding to the Plan.

Ron Ward explained that the aim of the Plan was to ensure that the assets of the village were protected for future generations. He stated that he was meeting officers from the Planning Service next month to discuss how the Plan would influence the planning process.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins stated that this was the eighth Neighbourhood Plan to be completed in the District. It had been formally submitted in October 2021 and subjected to a referendum on 9 February 2023, where there had been a turnout of 17% and 91.93% had voted in favour. The Plan had eight objectives and 12 policies to deliver. Its main aim was to maintain the character of the village and all planning applications in the village would need to comply with the development plan. Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins thanked the officers in the Planning Service for their efforts in supporting the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Graham Cone spoke in favour of the Plan. He praised the work of the local volunteers, the resident groups, the Parish Council and District Councillors, as well as the supporting officers. He stated that the work on the Plan had brought different parts of the village closer together to develop something that would protect the character of Fulbourn for future generations.

Councillor Carla Hofman expressed her appreciation for all the work that had gone into the Plan and the passion shown by local residents for their village.

Councillor John Williams thanked all the volunteers for delivering such a comprehensive and robust Neighbourhood Plan, which would have to be considered by the Council when determining planning applications in the village.

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins proposed and Councillor John Williams seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation Council

Agreed to

- A)** Note that the referendum for the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan took place on 9 February 2023.
- B)** “Make” (adopt) the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, as it was a successful referendum. The made version of the Plan is attached as an Appendix to the report.

11. **Appointment of Monitoring Officer**

The Chief Executive introduced this report, which proposed the appointment of the Monitoring Officer at the Council. She expressed her thanks to the Councillors involved in the recruitment process and noted their recommendation that John Murphy be appointed.

Councillor Pippa Heylings expressed her thanks to Rory McKenna, the outgoing Monitoring Officer, for his professionalism and wise guidance. The Chair echoed this and thanked him for his support whilst she was both Vice Chair and Chair of Council.

Councillor Richard Stobart proposed and Councillor Peter Sandford seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and by affirmation

Council

Agreed to

- A)** Appoint John Murphy as this authority’s Monitoring Officer from 22 May 2023
- B)** Note that in the intervening period between the departure of the current Monitoring Officer (31 March 2023) and the arrival of the new Monitoring Officer, the role will be covered by Tom Lewis, Head of 3C Legal Shared

Service.

12. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that the Council's representative on the Board was not present and so it was likely that any questions would have to be given a written response.

Councillor Heather Williams noted that a new Chief Executive had been appointed and asked if the Leader had the same level of confidence in the new appointment that she had in the previous post holder. Councillor Brian Milnes stated that a written answer would be provided to this question, which was likely to answer in the affirmative. Councillor Daniel Lentell expressed his support for the new Chief Executive but indicated that the position was as impossible one.

The Chair asked that future reports could be in portrait format instead of landscape.

Council noted the report.

13. Greater Cambridge Partnership

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that in his experience the Greater Cambridge Partnership was not consulting effectively on its decisions before they were taken and he asked if the Council's representatives could improve feedback from the Partnership.

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that 75 councillors were invited to a recent event organised by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, but only five councillors attended. This was very disappointing, but officers would continue to engage with councillors as clearly the knowledge of local members was very important. Councillor Heather Williams suggested that this event could have been better advertised. She asked that the villages of Bassingbourn, Litlington, Guilden Morden and Steeple Morden in the south of the District were not forgotten. Councillor Daniel Lentell suggested that the Greater Cambridge Partnership had a disjointed relationship with the area's local authorities and its support of a congestion charge had damaged its reputation.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams hoped that the work on Sawston greenway was not delayed. Councillor Brian Milnes concurred.

Council noted the report.

14. Questions From Councillors

14 (a) From Councillor Daniel Lentell

At the previous Full Meeting of this Council the Leader and her Cabinet proposed & supported the maximum allowable rise in the rent paid by Social Housing

tenants, arguing that such a rise would fund upgrades to the energy efficiency of homes, thus reducing utility bills.

Analysis, such as that carried out by Cornwall Insight - as quoted by the BBC's money-saving expert Martin Lewis, suggests that a typical energy bill will drop back to £2,153pa by July this year.

Will the leader specify, and timetable, what additional benefits Council Tenants can expect after their rents go up? And was any effort made to consult with tenants as to whether they would have prioritised lower rents over someday maybe getting triple-glazed windows etc.?

Councillor John Batchelor explained that affordable housing was completely funded from rental income. Rent increases were made annually and were linked with inflation. To be self-financing, annual rent increases were based on Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) plus 1%. However, this year this would have meant an increase of 11.1%, which many tenants may have found unaffordable. The Government had introduced a rent cap of 7% as a compromise. The Council had a range of statutory requirements including achieving the Net Zero target by 2050, bringing all newly let properties to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C by 2025 and raising all existing properties to the same standard by 2028. New building regulations had to be complied with and the cost of repairs had increased due to inflation. Those tenants who received housing benefit would have their rent increase covered and support was offered to all tenants who were struggling financially. Consultation with tenant representatives on this and other matters, took place at the Housing Engagement Board.

As his supplementary question, Councillor Daniel Lentell asked why had there been such a large increase in energy charges for the residents at Elm Court in his ward. Councillor John Batchelor explained that the 19 flats at Elm Court were heated by a communal boiler. The three-year fixed price deal had come to an end in December and energy costs had increased from 1.69p per kwh to 29.3p per kwh. Tenants had been paying the lower rate from January to March and there would be no attempt to ask them to pay the shortfall. Officers had met with tenants and their families to warn them of the impending increase in their energy bill. In the short term any increases would be capped at £30 per week until the Government's general discount rate was applied.

14 (b) From Councillor Peter Sandford

Would the Leader use her position on the Combined Authority board to ensure that South Cambs council taxpayers are receiving value for money from the subsidised bus services?

Councillor Brian Milnes stated that the lack of reliability of bus services was regrettable. He assured Council that he had raised this issue at the Combined Authority, which had decided to levy a precept of £12 to provide a subsidised bus service. Bus provision in the County was unsatisfactory and the Combined Authority was considering the option of bus franchising. The Parish and Cabinet Liaison meeting in June will focus on transport and Mayor Dr Nik Johnson will be

present to respond directly to concerns.

As his supplementary question, Councillor Peter Sandford asked if it was possible to publish the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that measure the performance of our bus services and whether the website could be improved to allow customers to comment on these services. Councillor Brian Milnes stated that he would ask the Combined Authority to consider these requests.

14 (c) From Councillor Sally Ann Hart

Does Ermine Street Housing just deliver a receipt to this council or are there other benefits?

Councillor John Batchelor explained that Ermine Street Housing was owned by the Council and its business activity provided the Council with a return of £3.6 million in 2022/23. The company also worked closely with the Housing Department to provide accommodation to vulnerable groups. Two houses in Cambourne were let to Shire Homes to use as temporary accommodation, reducing the need to use bed and breakfast to house single homeless people. The company was carrying out a full stock condition survey which would inform future versions of the Business Plan. The company was also carrying out a green energy audit to reduce its carbon footprint. Ermine Street Housing leased 190 homes from the Ministry of Defence, which was an arrangement that was expected to continue in the medium to long term. The Council would be increasing its interest rate charge to the company to 4.25%, which would increase its rate of return to the Council to £4 million. Councillor Batchelor thanked officers for achieving these successes.

There was no supplementary question.

14 (d) From Councillor Lisa Redrup

Does the Leader know the government's preferred route for EWR, and how will this council be engaging with them and the rail minister moving forward?

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that the Council did not know the preferred route and he was very disappointed about the lack of progress made on this issue over the last year. He recognised the importance of this issue to residents, especially those who were struggling to sell their properties due to the uncertainty.

As her supplementary question, Councillor Lisa Redrup asked how engaged the Council was on trying to move the project forward. Councillor Brian Milnes stated that the Council had invited rail minister Huw Merriman to meet with this authority's representatives without success. Councillor Milnes explained that he would continue to attend the forums and meetings convened by EWR, where he would attempt to gain answers for the District's residents.

14 (e) From Councillor Helene Leeming

How are the Council and local partner organisations ensuring that the asylum seekers being housed in Bar Hill are being given all the appropriate support as new members of our South Cambs community?

Councillor Bill Handley explained that the Home Office's contract provided asylum seekers with living essentials. A local working group had been established to bring together local councillors, Bar Hill Parish Council and key officers from the County Council. He thanked local member Councillor Bunty Waters and Bar Hill Parish Council for their support on this matter.

Councillor Helene Leeming did not have a supplementary question.

14 (f) From Councillor Graham Cone

Will the Leader commit to whether or not the administration will be consulting residents on their plans for a four-day week at any point?

Councillor Brian Milnes explained that residents had already been giving their opinion on the four-day week and a simple form on the website assisted them in this process. He explained that the Council was the first local authority to trial a four-day week and so there was no set process to follow. The Council would continue to be open and transparent on this issue and residents and councillors would be further updated at the Cabinet meeting in May.

Councillor Graham Cone did not have a supplementary question.

14 (g) From Councillor Heather Williams

Will the Leader review how residents are able to report planning compliance complaints as the 'fill the form in' approach has now been introduced?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins explained that the Compliance Team had been undergoing a period of transformation, which included the appointment of a new manager and a setting up of a new online e-form. Since December 2022 the Council had received 168 referrals and 103 of these had been through the online form. This would continue to be kept under review.

As her supplementary question, Councillor Heather Williams stated that local members were receiving more referrals from residents on this matter, as they were reluctant to provide their home address. She asked if this could be looked at. Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins stated that the Council could not receive anonymous reports on this issue and if necessary councillors could raise a matter on a resident's behalf.

14 (h) From Councillor Tom Bygott

When will the Leader say where the approximate 8,000 houses are going to go in the next local plan?

Councillor Dr Tumi Hawkins reminded Council that February's Cabinet had

received a report on the Local Plan. This had highlighted that the objectively assessed housing need had increased, partly due to local economic growth. A draft local plan was now being prepared.

There was insufficient time for a supplementary question to be asked.

14 (i) From Councillor Sue Ellington

It was noted as there had been insufficient time to ask this question, Councillor Sue Ellington would be given the option of a written answer or for the question to be carried forward to the next Council meeting.

14 (j) From Councillor Mark Howell

It was noted as there had been insufficient time to ask this question, Councillor Mark Howell would be given the option of a written answer or for the question to be carried forward to the next Council meeting.

14 (k) From Councillor Bunty Waters

It was noted as there had been insufficient time to ask this question, Councillor Bunty Waters would be given the option of a written answer or for the question to be carried forward to the next Council meeting.

15. Notices of Motion

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

Councillor Peter Fane, as acting Chair, explained that the motion had been amended with the Chair's consent. It was noted that a maximum of 30 minutes was allowed for the motion.

Councillor Heather Williams explained that it was the first paragraph of the motion which had been amended, due to events that had occurred after the deadline for motions had expired. She stated that this motion had been brought to Council in response to the level of concern that many people had regarding the congestion charge. Part of the concern was that there was no mandate for the introduction of the charge and a referendum would allow everyone in Cambridgeshire to vote on whether they wanted to see it introduced.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that she was trying to find some consensus on this matter and she expressed her disappointment not just in the decision of the County Council to reject a referendum, but also in the nature of their debate. She stated that a referendum would give an opportunity for an open discussion, which would allow both sides to express their point of view. It was democratic and elected councillors should not fear democracy. She suggested that the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership should speak for the entire authority and should be asking for a referendum.

Councillor Richard Stobart stated that the consultation on this matter had received 23,000 submissions and there had been a considerable effort to hear the views of young people, who were greatly affected by this matter but would not be old enough to vote in a referendum.

Councillor Stephen Drew explained that many people who lived just outside Cambridgeshire would be affected by the establishment of a Sustainable Transport Zone, but would be excluded from voting in a referendum purely for Cambridgeshire residents.

Cllr Martin Cahn opposed a referendum as it was unclear what people would be voting on, given that the congestion charge proposals had not yet been agreed. It was also unclear who should be allowed to vote in the referendum, as the issue affected many people outside the county's border. He concluded that it was too complex a matter for a simple yes/no question and he compared it to the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Councillor Tom Bygott stated that the Greater Cambridge Partnership wanted to impose a tax on residents without a democratic mandate to do so. He supported a referendum as the most effective way of determining the opinion of the public on this matter. Councillor Dr James Hobro explained that Cambridgeshire County Council would decide whether to implement the congestion charge and not the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Councillor Graham Cone explained that he would be supporting the motion due to the number of residents, from a large cross section of the population, who had contacted him opposing the proposed congestion charge. He added that as someone who worked on the biomedical campus, he could report that there was considerable opposition to including Addenbrookes Hospital in the congestion charge zone.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams spoke in favour of a referendum as the congestion charge had not been an issue at the local elections and so the public had not been given the chance to vote on this contentious matter. He stated that the franchise for a referendum would be the same as the franchise used to elect councillors in a county council election, who ultimately would decide whether to introduce a congestion charge. He also asserted that voters considered the interests of young people and others who were not able to vote.

Councillor Peter Sandford stated that he understood that the cost of a referendum would be £1.5 million, which he felt could not be justified to residents, as it would be better spent on more pressing issues, such as fixing potholes. The proposed referendum essentially duplicated question 9 of the Greater Cambridge Partnership's consultation and he concluded that we should wait for the results and analysis of this.

Councillor Judith Rippeth suggested that a referendum would disenfranchise not only those under 18, but also those who lived just outside Cambridgeshire and those, of all ages and locations, who had taken part in the consultation by the

Greater Cambridge Partnership. The consultation allowed a more nuanced response than a simple yes or no referendum.

Councillor John Williams explained that the Greater Cambridge Partnership had just carried out an extensive consultation, which had resulted in 23,000 responses, with open questions that had encouraged nuanced answers to a complex question. The responses were being compiled into a report that would be discussed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership Board in June. The Board would then make a recommendation to the County Council on the proposed scheme. He opposed the motion, as a simple yes or no referendum disregarded the consultation and was not appropriate at this time.

Councillor Daniel Lentell explained that 15,000 Cambridgeshire residents had signed a petition asking for a referendum on this issue. He stated that compared to Brexit, the congestion charge was a simple issue and so a referendum would be appropriate. He opposed the charging of £5 for those visiting Addenbrookes Hospital, for Cambridge residents simply driving off their property and for delivery drivers visiting the city. He asked that businesses who were reporting that their livelihoods would be disrupted by the charge be listened to. He supported a referendum because the decision makers did not have a mandate to introduce a congestion charge.

Councillor Heather Williams stated that limiting the referendum to those who lived in Cambridgeshire made sense, as these were the residents most affected by the proposed charge. A referendum would explicitly ask whether residents were in favour of a congestion charge, whilst the recent consultation did not do that. She suggested that the cost of the referendum could be crowd funded, as this would be cheaper than having to pay the charge. She stated that those who wanted to introduce a congestion charge had no mandate to do so and a referendum could provide one. She explained that the congestion charge was a controversial, cross-party issue and a referendum was an appropriate way to deal with such a matter. She had been contacted by carers, businesses and a disabled person, all opposed to the charge. She explained that the actual wording of the referendum was not under discussion. The issue was whether councillors believed that residents should have a vote on this issue or not. She concluded that if councillors rejected a referendum then they were in effect saying that they knew better than the residents on this issue.

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Daniel Lentell seconded the motion. A vote was taken and were cast as follows:

In favour (8):

Councillors Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya, Tom Bygott, Graham Cone, Sue Ellington, Daniel Lentell, Bunty Waters, Dr Richard Williams and Heather Williams.

Against (20):

Councillors John Batchelor, Dr Martin Cahn, Stephen Drew, Peter Fane, Bill Handley, Sunita Hansraj, Sally Ann Hart, Geoff Harvey, Tumi Hawkins, Pippa Heylings, Dr James Hobro, Helene Leeming, Annika Osborne, Dr Lisa Redrup,

Judith Rippeth, Peter Sandford, Richard Stobart, Natalie Warren-Green, Eileen Wilson and John Williams

Abstain (1):

Councillor Carla Hofman.

Council **Rejected** this Motion.

16. Chair's Engagements

It was noted that the Chair had not attended any engagements on behalf of the authority since the last Council meeting.

The Meeting ended at 5.05 p.m.
