

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 19 May 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors: David Bard, Val Barrett, Henry Batchelor, John Batchelor, Anna Bradnam, Francis Burkitt, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Doug Cattermole, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone, Pippa Corney, Simon Crocker, Christopher Cross, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Sue Ellington, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Philippa Hart, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Howell, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Tony Orgee, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Tim Scott, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Edd Stonham, Peter Topping, Ingrid Tregoing, Richard Turner, Robert Turner, Buntly Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes, John Williams, Tim Wotherspoon and Nick Wright

Officers:	Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
	Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
	Stephen Reid	Senior Planning Lawyer
	Graham Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2016/17

Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor Sue Ellington be elected as Chairman of the Council for the 2016/17 civic year.

Councillor Ellington signed the acceptance of office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2016/17

Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor David McCraith be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2016/17 civic year.

Councillor McCraith signed the acceptance of office.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Fraser, Sebastian Kindersley, Des O'Brien and Ben Shelton.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 13 due to him being a Member of the Ermine Street Housing Board, and indicated that he would leave the Council Chamber for the consideration of that item.

5. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Members that they needed to update their register of interests whenever their circumstances changed.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 February 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendment of typographical errors.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 March 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the amendment of a typographical error and a change to reflect that the Inspectors' letter had been received in May 2015.

7. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

Council **RECEIVED** the report of the Returning Officer on the results of the local elections held on 5 May 2016 and welcomed Councillors John Batchelor, Doug Cattermole and Ingrid Tregging to their first meeting of the Council since their election.

8. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

On the nomination of Councillor Simon Edwards, seconded by Councillor Lynda Harford, Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor Peter Topping be elected as Leader of the Council.

Councillor Topping signed the acceptance of office.

Members took this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing Leader of the Council, Councillor Ray Manning, for his leadership, character and humour during his term of office.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, announced Members of his Cabinet and their respective responsibilities, as follows:

Leader of the Council	Peter Topping
Corporate and Customer Services	Mick Martin
Environmental Services	Mark Howell
Finance and Staffing	Simon Edwards
Greater Cambridge City Deal	Francis Burkitt
Housing	Lynda Harford
Planning	Robert Turner
Strategic Planning	Tim Wotherspoon

Councillor Topping took this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Councillor Nick Wright, and thanked him for his valuable contributions in working with the business community and raising the economic profile of South Cambridgeshire.

10. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the public had been received.

11. PETITIONS

No petitions for consideration by Council since the last meeting had been received.

12. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**12 (a) Name of Corporate Governance Committee (Corporate Governance Committee, 18 March 2016)**

Councillor Tony Orgee proposed that the name of the Corporate Governance Committee be changed to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, as recommended by the Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2016.

Councillor Francis Burkitt seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to change the name of the Corporate Governance Committee to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

13. ERMINE STREET HOUSING LTD: RE-APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR

NOTE – further to his declaration of a non-pecuniary interest, Councillor Richard Turner left the Council Chamber for the duration of the consideration of this item.

Councillor Lynda Harford, Portfolio Holder for Housing, proposed that Stephen Hills be re-appointed as the Director of Ermine Street Housing Ltd.

Councillor Mark Howell seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Stephen Hills as Director of Ermine Street Housing Ltd, the Council's housing company, for a further 12 months alongside his role as Director of Housing for the Council.

14. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES FOR 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report on the revised political proportionality of the Council and allocation of seats to committees following the local elections held on 5 May 2016 and Councillor Cicely Murfitt's subsequent decision to join the Independent Group.

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, proposed the allocation of committee seats, as set out in Appendix A to the report circulated with the supplementary agenda, and nominations of political group leaders to seats on committees.

Councillor Robert Turner seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously **APPROVED**:

(a) The allocation of seats on committees and joint committees, as follows:

	No. of seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Audit and Corporate Governance	9	6	2	1
Civic Affairs	12	8	3	1
Employment	9	5	3	1
Licensing	15	9	4	2
Planning	12	8	3	1
Partnerships Review	9	6	2	1
Scrutiny and Overview	9	6	2	1
Total	75	48	19	8

	No. of seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Joint Development Control – Cambridge Fringes	6	4	1	1

(b) The nominations of the political group leaders to seats on committees and joint bodies, as set out below:

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Simon Crocker	John Batchelor	Douglas de Lacey
Christopher Cross	John Williams	
Andrew Fraser		
Roger Hall		
Tony Orgee		
Nick Wright		

Substitutes in hierarchical list:

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group	Non-Group
Ray Manning	Philippa Hart	<i>See Non-Group</i>	Nigel Cathcart
Grenville Chamberlain	Anna Bradnam	Edd Stonham	
Sue Ellington			
Charles Nightingale			
Richard Turner			

Civic Affairs Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group	Non-Group
David Bard	Janet Lockwood	Deborah Roberts	Nigel Cathcart
Simon Crocker	Bridget Smith		
Sue Ellington			
David McCraith			
Charles Nightingale			
Peter Topping			
Bunty Waters			
<i>See Non-Group</i>			

Substitutes in hierarchical list:

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Grenville Chamberlain	Sebastian Kindersley	Douglas de Lacey
Ray Manning	Aidan Van de Weyer	Neil Davies
Alex Riley		Edd Stonham
Raymond Matthews		Peter Johnson
Mick Martin		Cicely Murfitt

Employment Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Val Barrett	Doug Cattermole	Edd Stonham
Pippa Corney	Sebastian Kindersley	
Simon Edwards	Bridget Smith	
Ray Manning		
Alex Riley		

Substitutes in hierarchical list:

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Grenville Chamberlain	Philippa Hart	Douglas de Lacey
Sue Ellington		Neil Davies
Caroline Hunt		Peter Johnson
Christopher Cross		Deborah Roberts
		Cicely Murfitt

Licensing Committee

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group	Non-Group
Val Barrett	Anna Bradnam	Cicely Murfitt	Nigel Cathcart
Graham Cone	Jose Hales	Deborah Roberts	
Kevin Cuffley	Janet Lockwood		
Andrew Fraser	<i>See Non-Group</i>		
Mervyn Loynes			
Raymond Matthews			
Charles Nightingale			
Alex Riley			
Richard Turner			

Substitutes in hierarchical list:

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Grenville Chamberlain	Henry Batchelor	Douglas de Lacey
Nick Wright	Hazel Smith	Peter Johnson
Mark Howell		Neil Davies
Bunty Waters		Edd Stonham

Planning Committee**Conservative**

David Bard
 Brian Burling
 Pippa Corney
 Kevin Cuffley
 David McCraith
 Des O'Brien
 Robert Turner
 Tim Scott

Liberal Democrat

John Batchelor
 Anna Bradnam
 Sebastian Kindersley

Independent Group

Deborah Roberts

*Substitutes in hierarchical list:***Conservative**

Charles Nightingale
 Roger Hall
 Val Barrett
 Alex Riley
 Nick Wright

Liberal Democrat

Hazel Smith
 Aidan Van de Weyer
 Philippa Hart
 Henry Batchelor
 Doug Cattermole

Independent Group

Cicely Murfitt
 Douglas de Lacey
 Peter Johnson
 Edd Stonham
 Neil Davies

Partnerships Review Committee**Conservative**

David Bard
 Kevin Cuffley
 Andrew Fraser
 Ray Manning
 Ben Shelton
 Bunty Waters

Liberal Democrat

Henry Batchelor
 Janet Lockwood
 Ingrid Tregoing

Independent Group

See Liberal Democrat

*Substitutes in hierarchical list:***Conservative**

Grenville Chamberlain
 Roger Hall
 Tony Orgee
 Val Barrett
 David McCraith

Liberal Democrat

Aidan Van de Weyer
 Tumi Hawkins

Independent Group

Deborah Roberts
 Douglas de Lacey
 Peter Johnson
 Neil Davies
 Edd Stonham

Scrutiny and Overview Committee**Conservative**

David Bard
 Grenville Chamberlain
 Graham Cone
 Kevin Cuffley
 Tony Orgee
 Bunty Waters

Liberal Democrat

Henry Batchelor
 Jose Hales
 Philippa Hart

Independent Group

See Liberal Democrat

*Substitutes in hierarchical list:***Conservative**

Roger Hall
 Andrew Fraser
 Ray Manning
 David Whiteman-Downes
 Val Barrett

Liberal Democrat

Anna Bradnam
 Tumi Hawkins
 John Batchelor
 Doug Cattermole

Independent Group

Neil Davies
 Douglas de Lacey
 Peter Johnson
 Edd Stonham
 Deborah Roberts

Joint Development Control Committee – Cambridge Fringes

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
David Bard	Aidan Van de Weyer	Douglas de Lacey
Kevin Cuffley		
Charles Nightingale		
Robert Turner		

Spokesperson: David Bard

Substitutes in hierarchical list:

Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Independent Group
Tom Bygott	Janet Lockwood	Neil Davies
Tim Wotherspoon	Doug Cattermole	Edd Stonham
Pippa Corney		

Nominations were received for the positions of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Sue Ellington as Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor Charles Nightingale as Vice-Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Robert Turner.

Councillor Philippa Hart proposed the appointment of Councillor Bridget Smith as Vice-Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Van de Weyer.

With 32 votes compared to 19 votes, Councillor Charles Nightingale was **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Andrew Fraser as Chairman of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Nick Wright as Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Ray Manning as Chairman of the Employment Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Val Barrett as Vice-Chairman of the Employment Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Alex Riley as Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Raymond Matthews as Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor David Bard as Chairman of the Planning Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Val Barrett.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor John Batchelor as Chairman of the Planning Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Anna Bradnam.

With 32 votes compared to 19 votes, Councillor David Bard was **APPOINTED** as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor Kevin Cuffley as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Pippa Corney.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor John Batchelor as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Anna Bradnam.

With 32 votes compared to 19 votes, Councillor Kevin Cuffley was **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Council unanimously **APPOINTED** Councillor Ben Shelton as Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor Bunty Waters as Vice-Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Grenville Chamberlain.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor Henry Batchelor as Vice-Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee, which was seconded by Councillor John Williams.

With 32 votes compared to 19 votes, Councillor Bunty Waters was **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chairman of the Partnerships Review Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor Tony Orgee as Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Kevin Cuffley.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor Jose Hales as Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Henry Batchelor.

With 32 votes compared to 19 votes, Councillor Tony Orgee was **APPOINTED** as Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointment of Councillor Grenville Chamberlain as Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Kevin Cuffley.

Councillor Bridget Smith proposed the appointment of Councillor Jose Hales as Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Henry Batchelor.

With 31 votes compared to 20 votes, Councillor Grenville Chamberlain was **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

Council unanimously **AGREED** the re-appointment of Grant Osbourn as the Council's Lead Independent Person and Gillian Holmes as the Council's Deputy Independent Person.

15. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE, JOINT AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES FOR 2016/17**

Councillor Peter Topping proposed the appointments to outside, joint and other member bodies for 2016/17 as circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Bridget Smith seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the below appointments to outside, joint and other bodies:

Name of outside body	Nominee
Age UK	Richard Turner
Bassingbourn Village College Centre Management Committee	Nigel Cathcart
Cambridge Marriage Guidance Council (Relate)	Val Barrett
Cambridge University Joint Councils Forum (Addenbrookes)	Sue Ellington Graham Cone Janet Lockwood
Cottenham Village College Sports Centre Management Group	Simon Edwards
Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board	Francis Burkitt <i>Peter Topping (sub)</i>
Francis John Clear Almshouses, Melbourn	Val Barrett
Health and Wellbeing District Members Forum	Sue Ellington
Mepal Outdoor Centre	Henry Batchelor
Northstowe Transport Working Group	Ray Manning Alex Riley Hazel Smith <i>Lynda Harford (sub)</i> <i>Tim Wotherspoon (sub)</i> <i>Aidan Van de Weyer (sub)</i>
Old West Internal Drainage Board	Brian Burling Christopher Cross Ray Manning Tim Wotherspoon
Shifting Offered Furniture Around (SOFA)	Janet Lockwood
Swaffham Internal Drainage Board	Robert Turner
Swavesey Byeways Advisory Committee	Robert Turner
Waterbeach Level Internal Drainage Board	Ingrid Tregoing

16. **JOINT SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE AND PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

Council **RECEIVED** the joint Scrutiny & Overview Committee and Partnerships Review Committee Annual Report 2015/16.

17. **MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUP LEADER'S ANNUAL STATEMENT**

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Opposition, presented her annual statement.

Councillor Smith welcomed Councillors John Batchelor, Doug Cattermole and Ingrid Tregoe to the Council and also welcomed the elevation of Councillor Lynda Harford to Cabinet, making the point that she would like to see more women on the body.

Councillor Smith questioned how the Council's new Leader would approach key issues facing the authority, such as:

- the Greater Cambridge City Deal and how the Leader would ensure that South Cambridge got its fair share out of the Deal;
- the Local Development Plan and whether it would be adopted, together with balancing the need to provide housing against protecting rural South Cambridgeshire and, in particular, the green belt;
- the implications of the Government's Housing Bill and how they would be handled locally;
- shared services and their implementation;
- devolution and the implications for South Cambridgeshire.

Council **RECEIVED** the Major Opposition Group Leader's Annual Statement.

18. WRITE OFF OF OUTSTANDING DEBTS 2015/16

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, presented a report which notified Council of debts written off under powers delegated to him as Portfolio Holder and the Chief Finance Officer as required by the Constitution.

In answer to a question by Councillor John Williams, Councillor Edwards clarified that the figures in the report were different to those reported at his recent Portfolio Holder Meeting. This was due to the fact that the report considered at his Portfolio Holder Meeting related to in-year write offs only, whereas this report for Council covered all write offs with some cases being from a number of years ago.

Council **NOTED** the amounts written off under delegated powers.

19. APPROVAL OF UK MUNICIPAL BONDS AGENCY'S FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

This item was **WITHDRAWN**.

20. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

20 (a) From Councillor Sebastian Kindersley

Philippa Hart asked the following question on behalf of Councillor Sebastian Kindersley in respect of the devolution proposals:

"Is the Leader planning on involving Councillors in this process at all or is he planning on simply presenting the Council with a fait accompli when the papers for the 28 June meeting are published?"

She also asked, on Councillor Kindersley's behalf:

"Will the Leader and his Conservative administration be taking the Devolution deal as required by the Chancellor or will they be leaving it as not currently being in the best interests of the people of South Cambridgeshire?"

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, responded by saying that this was a matter for the Council but that it was also a matter for leaders of communities and, as elected Members, all South Cambridgeshire District Councillors had to take this matter very seriously. He invited all Members to a seminar provisionally scheduled to be held on 7 June 2016 in order that the devolution proposition could be openly discussed, acknowledging that it had changed since originally put forward. Councillor Topping also made the point that the leadership of the Council had been fighting to get the best possible deal out of any devolution proposals for the people of South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Philippa Hart, as a supplementary question, asked whether the Leader would be bound by any vote taken at the extraordinary meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 28 June 2016 in respect of the devolution proposal.

Councillor Topping said that, in the spirit of democracy, he would be bound by the result of that vote.

20 (b) From Councillor Bridget Smith

Councillor Bridget Smith asked the following question:

“The new Cabinet Member for The City Deal has not yet set any dates for his Portfolio Holder Meetings. When might we expect these to commence, how often will they take place and how will he use them to include members in scrutiny of the City Deal and in its processes and decision making?”

Councillor Francis Burkitt, Portfolio Holder for the Greater Cambridge City Deal, referred to briefings that would be held for all Members of the three partner Councils throughout the year, with the first scheduled to be held at Shire Hall in Cambridge on 24 May 2016. He confirmed that he would not be holding Portfolio Holder Meetings, reminding Members that meetings of the City Deal Joint Assembly and Executive Board were public meetings that anyone could attend, which he felt effectively acted as his Portfolio Holder Meetings. He was of the opinion that any scrutiny of the City Deal from a South Cambridgeshire perspective could be undertaken through the Council’s scrutiny and overview function.

Councillor Smith, as a supplementary question, asked whether there was any truth to rumours that the Executive Board was holding closed meetings regarding the Cambridge Access Study.

Councillor Burkitt confirmed that the Board did have informal meetings with officers, which enabled Members of the Board to receive briefings and updates on specific aspects of the individual projects associated with the City Deal programme. He said that they were incredibly useful and that they needed to take place to ensure that Members were up to date and knew what was happening.

20 (c) From Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer

Councillor Van de Weyer asked the following question in the context of the Council having been featured in a Private Eye article on 1 April 2016 where the former Leader of the Council was allegedly involved in providing misleading information to a planning inspector:

“Do we agree that our role should be to ensure that the planning process works fairly for the common good of all? Do we agree that we cannot do this if we exacerbate the already deep sense of unfairness among so many participants?”

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, said that planning decisions were made on the basis of facts and application of the relevant laws. He added that the Council had a very effective, cross-party, Planning Committee that took its role very seriously. By way of addressing the concerns set out in the question, Councillor Topping said that this would be best done by demonstrating that the Council delivered services to all communities for which they were entitled. He closed by saying that the Council delivered excellent services and he felt that Members worked hard for the communities they represented.

20 (d) From Councillor Tumi Hawkins

Councillor Tumi Hawkins asked the following question:

“Firstly I would like to congratulate the former Leader, Councillor Manning, on his emphatic re-election. However, I note with interest the comments he is quoted in the Cambridge News, to have made. The quote I refer to is this:

‘Overall, the Lib Dems have won some seats back today which were always safe Lib Dem seats. We didn’t lose any councillors, but we lost some seats where some Conservative members had stood down. For us [the Conservatives] it’s steady as we go; there is no change for us.’

I found the statement rather disappointing, as it seemed to denigrate such a good result and the hard work done by so many people.

Now, I know that sometimes the press inadvertently get it wrong. So, can the Leader please clarify for the records which seats he was referring to as being safe Lib Dem seats and explain how the Conservatives could say there is no change when the party lost 2 seats it previously held, and failed to gain the seat vacated by an Independent which they had so wanted?”

Councillor Peter Topping, Leader of the Council, said that, ultimately, it was the electorate that decided.

20 (e) From Councillor Anna Bradnam

Councillor Anna Bradnam asked the following question:

“Under the arrangements for Shared Services between South Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council we understood that the Terms and Conditions for employees would be protected under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, known as TUPE. This involved staff in ICT and Building Control being transferred to Huntingdonshire District Council, staff in Legal Services being transferred to Cambridge City and staff from City Waste Services being transferred to South Cambridgeshire.

We note with concern that a number of experienced employees left after the recent TUPE transfers.

Please would the Council let us know the number and grades of South Cambridgeshire District Council staff who were involved in the TUPE process, who subsequently lost or left their jobs?”

Councillor Simon Edwards, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, said that it was very difficult to answer this question in an open forum as individuals would be easily identified as a result. He agreed to provide Councillor Bradnam with the information outside of the meeting and also confirmed that the TUPE process was carried out in accordance with the regulations.

Councillor Bradnam referred to reassurances that had been given regarding shared services ensuring greater resilience. As a supplementary question, she asked whether there would continue to be a service desk facility at South Cambridgeshire Hall for elected Members, covering each of the services.

Councillor Edwards, in his capacity of Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, was unable to answer the question as it related to services outside of his Portfolio and therefore offered to ensure that Councillor Bradnam received a written response to this supplementary question.

20 (f) From Councillor Hazel Smith

Councillor Hazel Smith asked the following question:

“The Conservative leaflet for the local elections stated that ‘SCDC’s plan to build new council homes for local people has taken off’. We all know that the policies introduced by the Conservative government since May 2015 mean that this just isn’t true! The Council’s business plan for its council house building programme is now in tatters.

At previous meetings, we have been reassured that the Council leadership is doing all it can to reduce the impact of government policies but that the Council itself could not clearly state its opposition to them.

Could the Leader and the Housing Portfolio Holder update the Council on their success in this regard and tell us about their plans to continue their efforts?”

Councillor Mark Howell, former Portfolio Holder for Housing, reminded Council that a programme for new Council housing was still in place. 72 new homes were currently in that programme and would be built, with Members and officers looking at other creative ways to include more in the programme.

Councillor Hazel Smith was pleased to hear that and said that more affordable housing was needed in the district for renting. As a supplementary question, she asked whether the Portfolio Holder agreed with Heidi Allen MP regarding signing up to the devolution proposal.

Councillor Lynda Harford, Portfolio Holder for Housing, was of the opinion that the devolution proposals may offer some pathways to enable this Council to build more Council housing. She reminded Councillor Smith, however, that in the past this leadership had committed to build Council houses and had embarked on a programme, with that programme continuing. Councillor Harford reported that the first 20 homes as part of the programme had been completed in Swavesey last week and she felt that this demonstrated the Council’s ability to be innovative and think its way through adversity. She was keen to continue to use the talents at the Council’s disposal, face each challenge and grasp any further opportunities that may be presented.

21. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Those engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since the last meeting, as set out in the agenda, were noted.

The Meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.
