



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Agenda Item 5

Minutes of the Meeting of East Cambridgeshire
District Council held in the Council Chamber,
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday
20 February 2020 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Christine Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor David Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor Sue Austen	Councillor Alec Jones
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Daniel Schumann
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor David Brown	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Charlotte Cane	Councillor Amy Starkey
Councillor Victoria Charlesworth	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Matthew Downey	Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Lis Every (Chairman)	Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Simon Harries	Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Julia Huffer	Councillor Gareth Wilson

Approximately 24 members of the public were in attendance.

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting, the Chairman announced the recent death of former District Councillor PJ Bridge, Independent Member for Cheveley from 1973 to 1999. One minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect.

56. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

8 Questions were submitted regarding Agenda Item 9: Call-in of the decision made at Operational Services Committee on 20 January 2020 relating to the review of grant to Citizen's Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC) by the following people:

- Anita Mills (Volunteer) – 2 questions
- Karl Relton (Ely Foodbank)
- Revd Robert Ely & Mrs Teresa Ely
- Chris Prescott (Volunteer)
- Pat Del Grazia (CARC Advice Service Leader)
- Linda Spiers (Volunteer)
- Penny Taylor (Volunteer)

The questions and responses are detailed in the Appendix to these Minutes.

A statement/question was asked by Susan Bussell from the newly formed East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network (CAN) regarding the sustainability of the Kennett development. Ms Bussell stated that East Cambridgeshire CAN was a diverse Group and would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Council on the issue of Climate Change.

Ms Bussell stated that concerted action was needed on Climate Change both nationally and locally, as it was affecting the health, safety and well-being of all people and the delivery of public services. The Kennett development would be a potential source of significant levels of carbon emissions and needed to be designed to be as sustainable as possible. Therefore, she questioned what the new build standards would be and how issues such as flooding mitigation would be addressed? Ms Bussell emphasised that what was good for the local community should be at the heart of the development and therefore urged Councillors to support the Motion on the Council Agenda tonight relating to Climate Change and Kennett Garden Village and to commit to consultation with experts and organisations such as East Cambridgeshire CAN to provide a sustainable community at Kennett that will thrive.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Anna Bailey, thanked Ms Bussell for her question and commended the title of the new East Cambridgeshire CAN, which reflected the 'can do' approach of this Council, and stated that the Council would welcome the opportunity to meet and work with the network. The Council was planning for a highly sustainable development at Kennett and this was also reflected in the Supplementary Planning Document on the subject currently being drafted, that would come to Committee in the summer. Similarly, Building Control Regulations were being revised to ensure sustainable development. More detail on these issues would be given in response to the Motion contained later on this Agenda.

The following question was submitted by retired District Councillor, Mr Peter Cresswell:

'Will East Cambridgeshire District Council please enter into negotiations with neighbouring authorities, West Suffolk Council and Newmarket Town Council, in order to convince Suffolk County Council that the household waste and recycling site, in Depot Road, Newmarket, should be re-opened as a matter of priority? Despite being in Suffolk, a great many East Cambridgeshire District Council residents used this facility, prior to its closure.

Households in the south of the district, particularly those in Woodditton Ward, have to travel up to 20 miles to their nearest waste disposal centre. How does this square with the Council's policy to reduce the carbon footprint in the district?

This is yet another cross border issue that needs addressing.

In the event of the above question receiving a positive response, will the Council please report back on discussions that take place with neighbouring authorities at the next Council meeting on 16th April 2020?’

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Anna Bailey, thanked Peter Cresswell for the question and stated that this Council had received a number of letters and lobbying on the issue. This Council was committed to keeping all of its Household Recycling sites open. Whilst this was not a site within East Cambridgeshire, there did need to be some cross-border discussion and co-operation. Following a request for data from our officers, there had been no evidence of increased instances of fly-tipping in the South of the District as a result of the closure of the Newmarket site. However, the Leader stated that she had written to Suffolk County Council on the closure of the Newmarket site and a copy of that letter had been circulated at the meeting. In addition, Councillors Starkey and Sharp, as local Ward Members, were in dialogue with Suffolk Councils on the issue.

57. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lavinia Edwards and Paola Trimarco

58. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At the request of Chairman, the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that Members had a statutory exemption to allow them to vote on the Budget.

No declarations of Interests were made by Councillors.

59. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to clarification that the meeting had concluded at 12.25am, having continued into the following day of 18th October.

60. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Council Procedure Rules

The Chairman reminded Members of relevant Council Procedure Rules and the Code of Conduct regarding debate at this meeting, including length of speeches; points of order and personal explanation; treating others with respect. The Chairman also noted the Procedure Rule on Members standing for speeches, but respected those Members not able to stand, without them needing to make a formal request to remain seated.

Alteration of Order of Business

Due to the level of public interest and attendance for the item, the Chairman stated that she had agreed to an amendment to the order of business to take Agenda Item 9: Call-in of decision made at Operational Services Committee on 20 January 2020 - review of grant to Citizen's Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC) after Agenda Item 6 on Petitions.

61. PETITIONS

Council received a Petition of over 500 local signatures requesting East Cambridgeshire District Council to reinstate its grant to Ely Citizen's Advice Bureau:

East Cambridgeshire District Council has decided to cease its grant funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Ely and provide the service itself. This means the CAB office may close, or its service be reduced.

- The Council does not have, and will not be seen to have, the **independence** which is essential to the service offered by the CAB, so it is probable that many people who need advice in the Ely area will be reluctant to use the Council's proposed service.
- The Council will be **wasting public funds** by employing and training staff to replace the free service provided by the CAB's many, experienced volunteers.

The Petition Organiser, Mr John Shippey, presented the Petition to the Council and addressed the Council. He stated that the Petition now had reached over 650 local signatures. He highlighted that the review had taken place without consultation, which was against the spirit of the community compact, even if it was not mandatory in this instance. Mr Shippey also drew particular attention to the issues of independence and value for money. With regard to independence, Mr Shippey was not questioning the Council's ability to deal with a range of queries from local residents but about whether such advice would be perceived as independent, particularly where a member of the public was in dispute with the Council. With regard to value for money, Mr Shippey highlighted that the independently verified value of CARC volunteers was almost twice that of the £47,000 grant and CARC was continuously looking to identify new funding streams. The Council will be spending twice the money of the grant to CARC to employ staff to undertake the services.

As the Petition related to the Call-in on the review of grant to CARC, Members were requested to consider the Petition and the comments of Mr Shippey as part of their deliberations on this item.

62. **CALL-IN OF DECISION MADE AT OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
20 JANUARY 2020 – REVIEW OF GRANT TO CITIZEN’S ADVICE RURAL
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Council considered the Call-in relating to the decision made at Operational Services Committee on 20 January 2020 regarding the review of Grant to Citizen’s Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC).

The Chairman referred Members to the Call-in Procedure Note attached at Agenda item 9a, and explained the purpose of the Call-in, which was for full Council to consider the matter afresh and whether it wished to make a final decision on the matter, which could be to uphold, amend or reject the previous decision of the Policy Committee.

The Director Commercial spoke to present the original report and extract of Minutes from the Operational Services Committee and drew Members’ attention to the Update Briefing Note detailing the latest position on the issues.

Councillor Mark Inskip, as Spokesperson for the Members who had submitted the Call-in, then proposed a Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Charlesworth, as follows:

‘To pause the review of the grant to Citizen’s Advice Rural Cambridgeshire for up to six months, retaining grant funding at the current level, to explore alternative ways forward that retain the advantages to the community of a significant contribution from Citizen’s Advice and the opportunity to clarify funding options. This pause to be further extended for a mutually agreed defined period if necessary.’

In speaking to his Motion, Councillor Inskip explained that the independence of CARC gave the public confidence which they may not have in seeking advice from the Council, as CARC’s advice services were free from any actual or perceived conflict of interest. This would be lost, if the Council delivered the service. It would also destroy the valuable expertise available from the CARC volunteers gathered over many years and accredited by the national organisation. This dedication and time was greatly valued both qualitatively and in terms of comparative actual value for money. The CARC services provided were much broader and multi-layered than detailed in the review document and could be permanently lost. This was why the wording of the Motion called for a pause, since there had been no formal discussion since March 2019, to enable meaningful discussion to take place to find a way forward.

The Chairman of Operational Services Committee, Councillor David Ambrose-Smith, summarised what had happened at the Committee, which included an extensive Public Question Time session, long debate and finally a vote to support the recommendations in the report which was carried. No alternative proposal had been presented at the Committee. Councillor

Ambrose-Smith requested a recorded vote on the Motion from Councillor Inskip.

Mr Michael Mealing, Chair of the CARC Trustee Board, addressed the Council and referred to the current position with regard to the Petition which showed the importance of the service to the local community. This was not a commercial service but a local charitable body with national accreditation and support. It provided a face-to-face information and advice service from the Ely office which was open 5 days a week – 3 days on a drop-in basis and 2 days by appointment. The local volunteers had 100s of hours training and experience, were closely supervised and had robust quality assurance mechanisms. There were 20 active volunteers from a wide range of professional backgrounds. Without funding, the knowledge, experience and ability of these volunteers to deal with clients with multiple problems and their valuable contribution to the community would be lost. Without the District Council grant funding, the Ely office also was likely to close from 31 March 2020. A Board meeting was taking place next week to consider a recommendation to that effect, since it was unlikely that the office could be kept open despite the rent-free nature of occupation of the District Council owned premises. Therefore, CARC would urge a pause for more time to find a better way forward.

The Leader of the Council expressed the sincere gratitude of the Council to the CARC volunteers for the excellent service they had provided over a number of years. She also explained the history of the grant to CARC and the excellent holistic services provided by the Housing and Community Services Team and their record in homelessness prevention, which had resulted in this Council not spending a penny on Bed and Breakfast accommodation since 2012 and which made us a national exemplar in this field. CARC had been informed of the proposed withdrawal of funding in March 2019 and the Government grant was only available to fund Council services. The review had shown a duplication of the services provided by CARC and the Council. In addition, CARC had been unable to deliver an outreach service in Soham and Littleport and open digital access. The EDCD grant only accounted for 10% of CARC's funding. The Council had a track record of providing holistic, accessible and immediate services 40 hours per week, as well as an out of hours service. The Community Hubs provided immediate, intensive and local support. This Council took seriously its duty to provide the best possible services to its residents and Councillor Bailey believed that this best could be achieved by our own staff and this was why she could not support the Motion.

In the ensuing debate on the Motion, questions were raised and comments made as follows:

A Member asked Mr Blencowe, CARC Chief Officer, how clients would be affected by the closure of the Ely office and a move to telephone/website access, as many of its clients were not IT literate. Mr Blencowe state that this would be a significant problem, since many clients had complex issues that needed face-to-face advice. The

Member urged Councillors to support the Motion, as she considered that the decision on withdrawal of the grant had been taken too quickly and without sufficient consultation. Therefore, a pause was required to conduct a proper review. Whilst she acknowledged the good qualities of the Housing and Community Services Teams in supporting local residents, many people were wary of authority of any sort and CARC had the independence which allayed such fears and this was a tremendous attribute that the Council did not have. Whilst the Council grant may be only 10% of CARC funding, organisations of this nature had to gather fractions of money from a range of sources in order to continue to function, so taking away this 10% may result in losing the service altogether. Therefore more time was needed for further discussions and to enable the organisation to address the potential loss of grant and find a sustainable way forward.

In response to a question by the Liberal Democrat Leader to the Chair of Operational Services Committee as to whether a copy of the full review report had been made available to CARC and if not could this be done, the Chair stated that he would confirm the position and respond. Councillor Dupré then referred to the fact that CAB was a nationally recognised body utilising many local volunteers who could be lost to the District. CARC could be forced into closure by default, sending a terrible message to the local community as to how this Council treats voluntary and charitable sector partners. The Motion provided a way back from this position, to allow for proper dialogue to enable the retention of the organisation and the expertise of its volunteers.

In response to a question by a Member requesting details of the training and assessment of CARC advisors, Mr Blencowe reported that there was a recognised qualification at NVQ level 2/3. Volunteers received triage and initial checks before undertaking up to 6 months training. There was then continual training and development, case feedback and reviews. Higher level advisors undertook up to 12 months training, with continual monitoring and review. All of this was a nationally recognised and accredited system. Similarly, the Council's Housing and Community Safety Manger explained the nationally recognised and continual training/assessment processes for her staff. The Member then commented that he did not consider that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been adequately completed.

In response to a question by a Member as to why outreach work was not carried out by CARC volunteers, Mr Blencowe stated that this had not proved effective in the experience of CARC. The member then commented that the review had shown an arrogance on the part of the Council and did not reflect the strength of local support and representations for CARC. He did not believe that adequate consultation had been undertaken with CARC on the issue.

A Member commented that some good points had been made, but this did not detract from the fact that CARC had been notified in March 2019 of the review of its funding. She acknowledged that people were sometimes reluctant to come to the Council offices for advice, which was why the Community Hubs were established.

In that connection, a Member highlighted the fact that this Council was providing a wider service than CARC and the national recognition of its expertise in the field of homelessness prevention. The key to the proposals was to provide the widest and best possible service to local residents in the most varied and imaginative way.

A Member emphasised that this Council was not closing down CARC but simply wanted to provide a holistic service to its residents. The Council was attempting to break down barriers through the Community Hubs and by offering home visits. CARC also had received advanced notification of the review. Funding streams changed for all organisations and the Council had faith in its award-winning Housing and Community Services Teams, whilst still giving some support to CARC by the continuation of rent-free premises for the Ely office. He acknowledged the valuable work of the CARC volunteers and hoped that the organisation would continue to work with the Council in the future.

In response to a question by a Member regarding the nature of CARC's response to the notification of the funding review in March 2019, Mr Blencowe stated that CARC had considered it to be a general review of the SLA with the Council rather than the likelihood of loss of the grant. In that connection, the Director Commercial stated that the Council had been clear at the meeting with CARC in March 2019 of the nature of the review and lack of guarantee of grant funding continuing after 2019/20. In addition, there had been ongoing discussions between CARC and the Communities and Partnerships Manager on the review and the report to Operational Services Committee. The Member then expressed concern at the apparent misunderstanding and ambiguity between the two organisations on the future of funding to CARC. It appeared that the Council was putting the letter of the law above the spirit of the law with regard to consultation. This could bring the Council into disrepute with other partner providers. The Member also questioned if the Council should be providing licensed financial advice to people. Therefore, a short pause was required to consider such matters further.

Whilst recognising and expressing the Council's thanks to the CARC volunteers, a Member referred to the expanding nature of the District which placed even greater pressures on resources and the delivery of services. Therefore, we needed to be ready to meet these challenges in the most innovative ways possible. The Council's Housing Team had done an incredible job in homelessness prevention and much of this

was due to the responsive nature of the service, helping people through a wide range of methods for the maximum hours per week possible. Whilst not denigrating the excellent services of CARC, ECDC can provide a quicker, more response service with better IT systems. This, combined with the inability to use the Government grant for CARC funding, was why he supported the Operational Services Committee review and decision.

A Member asked what services still would be provided by CARC if the Ely office closed from 31 March 2020. Mr Blencowe stated that these would comprise of the national phone line and Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme. The Member then asked if TUPE would apply to the staff employed at the Ely office. The Director Commercial stated that if TUPE applied, the Council would be happy to take the staff concerned. The Member stated that his local Ward constituents had expressed their opposition to him with regard to the closure of the Ely office and lack of advance knowledge of this. Therefore, further dialogue was required on the issues. He believed that a compromise solution could be reached, with more time and discussion.

A Member commented that the discussions this evening had demonstrated the benefits of the local Community Hubs and queried why these were not operated by CARC. Mr Blencowe stated that CARC had trialled outreach services, but these had not proved effective. In response to a further question to the Housing and Community Safety Manager, it was confirmed that the Ely Community Hub operated weekly at present and it was anticipated that, with the recruitment of additional staff, a weekly service could be operated for all Community Hubs.

In response to a further question by a Member, the Housing and Community Safety Manager agreed to provide details of the training received by members of her Team. The Member asked Mr Blencowe to assess the importance of the independence of CARC and he stated that this was a vital attribute, as many people had a fear and distrust of 'establishment' and 'authority' which meant that they would not seek advice from the Council. In that connection, the Member highlighted the fact that many of the CARC volunteers were retired professionals with an extensive range of past knowledge and skills, who could provide complex advice. They received continuous training and had the support of the national framework of CAB. Speed of response was not the only issue in the provision of advice, but it also needed to be considered and consistent. This was why more time was required to work with CARC.

In summing-up, Councillor Inskip stated that he had serious concerns about how the review process had been conducted and the differing interpretations of the meeting held in March 2019. This had left the intentions of the Council with regard to the ceasing of grant funding

unclear and was why a deferral was required. Members had not been briefed on the matter before it came to the Operational Services Committee and had only been made aware of the possible closure of the Ely office from 31 March 2020 this evening. Whilst no reflection on the advice services provided by the Housing and Community Services Teams, it would be better to spend 6 months in discussion with CARC to ensure the provision of the best services possible to the local community from both providers.

A recorded vote was taken on the Motion, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: (11) – Cllrs Cane, Charlesworth, Downey, Dupré, Harries, Inskip, Jones, Trapp, A Whelan, C Whelan and Wilson.

AGAINST: (13) – Cllrs C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Bovingdon, Brown, Huffer, Hunt, D Schumann, J Schumann, Sharp, Starkey, Stubbs and Webber.

ABSTENTIONS: (2) – Cllrs Austen and Every.

The Motion was declared to be lost.

Following the defeat of the Motion, the Democratic Services Manager was requested to explain the procedural position. She stated that in the event that Council declined or was unable to take a decision on the issue, the original decision of the Operational Services Committee would stand.

No further Motion was proposed.

In the absence of a decision by Council on the matter, the decision of Operational Services Committee on 20 January 2020 regarding the review of Grant to Citizen's Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC) stands unchanged as follows:

1. That the availability of grant funding to CARC in 2020/21 and future years cease.
2. That the recommendation to directly deliver the service as set out in paragraph 5.12 of the report to Operational Services Committee be approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.55pm for departing members of the public and re-convened at 7.56pm. Councillor Huffer left the meeting at 7.55pm and did not return.

63. **MOTIONS**

(i) **Antisemitism**

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr David Brown:

East Cambridgeshire is a welcoming, safe and tolerant district; incidents of police reported hate crime are low compared with the wider Cambridgeshire Constabulary area.

Nevertheless, East Cambridgeshire District Council acknowledges with concern the Community Security Trust's (CST) 2019 report "Antisemitic Incidents January - June 2019" which cites a worrying increase of antisemitic incidents in the UK and the highest total on record in the first six months of 2019. Home Office statistics from October 2019 show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred is targeted at Jewish people, up from 12% in 2018.

East Cambridgeshire District Council is currently drafting a revised Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity scheme to replace its Single Equalities Scheme 2016 - 2020.

East Cambridgeshire District Council wishes to join with the Government and other local authorities across the UK in adopting the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, including its associated 11 contemporary examples, as follows:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for "why things go wrong." It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective - such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Council therefore resolves to:

- 1) Condemn all forms of racism in all its manifestations
- 2) Adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism as the working model of challenging and confronting incidents of antisemitism
- 3) Include the IHRA definition in the Council's updated Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity scheme

Speaking on the Motion, the Leader of the Council stated that this had been proposed by her in response to a letter from Central Government asking all Councils to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

An amendment then was proposed by Councillor Mark Inskip and seconded by Councillor Simon Harries as follows:

Add to the end of the second paragraph:

“and second only to Muslim people who were the target of 47% of religiously motivated hatred in the same period.”

Such that the final sentence reads:

“Home Office statistics from October 2019 show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred is targeted at Jewish people up from 12% in 2018 and second only to Muslim people who were the target of 47% of religiously motivated hatred in the same period.”

To amend “resolves 1)” to read:

1) “Condemns all forms of discrimination against all protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity) in all its manifestations.”

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Inskip stated that having visited the World Holocaust Centre in Israel, he believed that it was right to make a clear statement against antisemitism, as many people still denied that the holocaust happened. But this should not be to the exclusion of other forms of discrimination. The statistics on religious hatred were truly shocking, with Muslims facing the highest levels of racially motivated hate crimes. This was why he had proposed the amendment to ensure that all protected characteristics were addressed.

As Chairman of the Finance and Assets Committee, Councillor Brown stated that he could not support the amendment in isolation, as the wording in the amendment needed to be included at the front of the new Equalities Policy that would be submitted to the Finance and Assets Committee. Therefore, he gave an assurance that when the new draft of the Policy came to that Committee this would be included at the front of it.

A number of other Members stated that they also were unable to support the amendment as it could be seen to devalue the focus on the issue of antisemitism and due to the assurance given that the wider issues relating to protected characteristics would be addressed as part of the review of the Policy.

Other Members spoke in support of the amendment, referring to the need to focus on all forms of discrimination and particularly on the radical rise in hate crimes against people of the Muslim faith. These Members commented that it would be wrong to place the needs of one Group higher than those of another and that was why the definition needed to be more wide-ranging.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was declared to be lost by 11 votes in favour to 13 against, with 1 abstention.

A further amendment then was moved by Councillor Cane and seconded by Councillor Christine Whelan as follows:

After first sentence add:

However, East Cambridgeshire District Council acknowledges with concern the published data on increases in hate incidents and crimes towards people with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). We commit to ensuring that every resident of the District is treated with respect, dignity and in an equal manner.

In second paragraph replace 'Nevertheless,' with 'Furthermore,'

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Cane stated that this recognised the increases in hate incidents and crimes towards people with protected characteristics, whilst the current motion appeared a bit dry and limited. This would give the clear message that every person within the District had the right to be treated with respect, dignity and in an equal manner. The level of hate crimes had increased and these could be very complex. These should not be tolerated.

The Chairman of Finance and Assets Committee and other Members reiterated their previous arguments.

Other Members stated that no forms or acts of hatred and discrimination should be seen in isolation and the hope was expressed that the Council would not be seen as paying lip service to equalities issues, as little spending on equality and diversity training had taken place in recent years.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was declared to be lost by 11 votes in favour to 13 against, with 1 abstention.

Returning to the Motion, Members acknowledged that antisemitism was a longstanding scourge on society and it was important to recognise that this would not be tolerated. Therefore, although the motion and IHRA definition could be regarded as a little dry, it should be supported to show that antisemitism would not be tolerated by this Council and Members then would hold the Chairman of Finance and Assets Committee to his assurance that all protected characteristics would be addressed in the new Equalities Policy. Councillor Brown stated that he looked forward to working with all Members of that Committee to ensure that a Policy was approved that satisfied all the issues highlighted during the debate.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be carried unanimously.

(ii) Climate Change and Kennett Garden Village

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Simon Harries and seconded by Cllr Charlotte Cane:

Preamble

The Council notes with approval the decision taken on October 17th 2019 to declare a climate emergency in the East Cambs district. The Council further notes that the climate emergency should be the catalyst for changing methods, working practices and principles in order to deliver real, measurable benefits to the district and its people.

The Council understands that positive action will be required in priority areas to deliver maximum benefit as quickly as possible. The priorities for action should be those activities that have the greatest potential for creating carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore offer the greatest opportunity for benefit if successfully addressed.

The Council accepts that the most carbon intensive activity undertaken today is in housing development and requests officers to review principles, methods and working practices in this area as a matter of urgency to ensure that measurable emission reductions are delivered without delay. The Council wishes priority focus to be given to the largest current development that is in S106 discussions. This development is the Kennett "Garden Village", which will therefore become a best practice exemplar for the future.

Actions

The Council instructs officers to review proposed actions related to Kennett in two specific areas: integrated transportation and build policy. The goal will be to identify actions that can be updated, improved and amended as a result of the climate emergency declaration. Using a real test case will make it possible to model real information, even if regulations do not permit substantive changes to this specific development.

By testing methods and identifying alternatives, we will learn lessons, develop better methods for the future and turn the climate emergency declaration into positive benefit.

Integrated Transportation

The Council notes that a thorough review of current and projected medium-term road traffic movements has been carried out but believes that insufficient work has been done in evaluating the likely road traffic impact of the new development, itself. The Council therefore asks officers to:

1. Evaluate the likely number of additional road vehicles passing along the B1085 once the development is complete, to reflect car ownership within the 500 housing units in the Kennett Garden Village area, together with

workers and visitors to the 100 bed care home, visitors and students to the primary school and workers / visitors at the light industrial park. Having evaluated the number of new vehicle movements, officers should provide the best available estimate concerning the increase to carbon emissions caused by this increase.

2. Liaise with Highways England and the CCC Highways Department to determine whether there is any long-term plan to close the Railway Bridge at the south of the B1085 to HGVs or if the current restrictions are only temporary.
3. Clearly state whether or not the requirements set out by Network Rail regarding the car park and rail bridge close to Kennett station have been agreed by ECDC. Notably, transfer of land ownership at no charge to NR, agreement to move the car park, agreement to replace the rail bridge at developer cost.
4. Liaise with Network Rail and the rail franchisees to give a clear date by when service frequency to Kennett station, especially for Greater Anglia trains, will be at least doubled. This needs to be a commitment, not an aspiration.

Build policy

The Council notes that air pollution levels are likely to rise in the area of Kennett by an estimated 2100% as a result of building work for the development, with other factors noted in the MLM Consultancy reports.

The Council further notes that issues have been raised by the Environment Agency, Anglia Water and Heritage England concerning potential for pollution of aquifers and damage to the natural and archaeological environment.

The Council also notes that declaration of a climate emergency implies new and measurably higher build standards in order to move fast towards a zero-carbon standard. The Council therefore instructs officers to:

1. Enumerate the changes to build standards for the future that will be set for developers in order to raise build standards related to emissions, heat loss, use of materials and building methods that go above and beyond current building regulations. In simple terms, what do we wish to change as a result of the climate emergency declaration?
2. Enumerate the clear mitigations, in terms of measurable actions, to be required from developers in order to avoid the projected growth in emissions. Where legally permitted these mitigations should be applied to Kennett, where not they should be introduced for future developments.
3. Enumerate the mitigations set in place to address issues related to possible chemical pollution, damage to the natural environment and protection of aquifers.

Long-term changes

The Council notes that the climate emergency declaration will require systemic changes in the way that planning activities are carried out, and will also require better decision-making tools for officers. The Council therefore requires officers

to present a strategy for upgrade, change and improvement in their own working methods and use of tools in order to accelerate the move to zero carbon development by the council and its trading companies.

Temporary halt to work

The Council instructs officers to take no major or irrevocable steps, such as issuing contracts, for work to commence at Kennett until the information requested in this motion has been presented to Full Council.

Speaking in support of the Motion, Councillor Harries stated that he hoped that this would be uncontroversial in the light of the motion passed at the previous Council meeting on climate change. This Motion was aimed at taking substantive action to show the Council's commitment to the declaration already made. It set out the required actions to prevent the Kennet development becoming an environmental disaster.

Members commented that the issues raised by Councillor Harries in the Motion were being addressed as part of the Planning process for the development and therefore a delay was totally unnecessary, particularly when the site was due to generate 150 units of badly needed affordable housing.

However, some Members commended Councillor Harries on work he had undertaken on the motion and the aim to put into practice the climate change declaration. They expressed the view that the principles underlying it should apply to any wholly-owned Council development, as the Council needed to mitigate the environmental impacts of its developments for the greater benefit of local residents. At present, Network Rail had given no commitment to improve rail services from Kennett Station. A Member referred to the differences between the Haddenham and Kennett CLTs, the former included extensive consultation, had the support of local residents and was a modest development, whilst the latter would see the existing population of around 350 increased by a further 500 houses and 1,000 people and was dividing local opinion. Members highlighted the need for sustainable transport links and high quality, sustainable construction standards to set an example, as the Council was the developer.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be lost by 11 votes in favour to 13 votes against, with 1 abstention.

64. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

Questions were received and responses given by the Leader of the Council as follows:

Question from Councillor Mark Inskip:

Question to the Leader of the Council on Carbon Footprints:
What is the current annual carbon footprint of the district council?

What is the current annual carbon footprint of the East Cambs Trading Company?

What is the current annual carbon footprint of East Cambs Street Scene?

What methodology has been used to derive those carbon footprints?

Has there been any independent audit of the figures?

Response from Leader of the Council:

The Council has undertaken work to assess its carbon footprint and this will be included as part of the Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan being submitted to Operational Services Committee in April 2020. This assessment applies the tried and tested methodology from the Carbon Trust used by other authorities and independently verified.

Questions from Councillor Lorna Dupré:

(1) No money has been allocated in the budget for the next five years for the development of a new local plan. Given the importance of an effective local plan, and the significant changes (such as the growing urgency of tackling climate change) that have occurred since the current plan was adopted five years ago, on what date will the council consider whether to begin the process of drawing up a new local plan?

(2) The council's Corporate Plan 2017-2019 promised an options appraisal for redevelopment of The Grange and relocation of the council office, and a plan to realise a capital receipt from The Grange and deliver a fit for purpose and efficient council office in an accessible location. What has happened to the options appraisal and the plan?

Responses from Leader of the Council:

(1) At the October 2019 Council meeting, it was resolved to review the development of a new Local Plan within 18 months and a report will come back to full Council within that period.

(2) When reviewed at the start of the current year, the 2019-22 Corporate Plan did not include a separate item for an options appraisal for redevelopment of The Grange and relocation of the Council Offices.

65. **SCHEDULE OF ITEMS RECOMMENDED FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES**

Council considered a report U184, previously circulated, containing items recommended from Committees and other Member bodies as follows:

1. FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE – 28 NOVEMBER 2019

(a) Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019-20 Review

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Council retain the 8.5% benefit scheme, i.e. the maximum benefit to working age claimants to be 91.5%;
- (ii) That enhancements to the treatment of Universal Credit income be introduced as detailed in the submitted report.

(b) Treasury Operations Mid-Year Report

It was resolved:

That the mid-year review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be noted.

2. FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE – 6 FEBRUARY 2020

2020/21 Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

It was resolved:

That approval be given to:

- The 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy;
- The Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement;
- The Prudential and Treasury Indicators;

as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

66. REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL STRATEGY AND COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

Council considered a report, U185, previously circulated, detailing the Council's proposed Revenue and Capital Budgets and the required level of Council Tax for 2020/21. The report also assessed the robustness of the budgets, the adequacy of reserves and updated the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Chairman reminded Members that there would be a recorded vote on this issue in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

The Finance Manager and S151 Officer summarised the report as follows:

'Council is asked to approve the Council Tax Resolution as detailed in appendix 1 to this report and the Council's budget as in appendices 2 to 5 of the report.

This recommends that this Council's Council Tax for a band D property during 2020-21 will be £142.14, this being frozen for a 7th consecutive year.

When the draft budget report was presented to Finance and Assets Committee on the 6th February, we were still waiting the final Local Government Finance Settlement from Government; this has now been published.

The consequence of this and other information that has come to hand since the draft budget was published for Finance and Assets Committee have resulted in the saving requirement in 2022-21 reducing from £3.33 million to £3.27 million.

The Council is in a good position in that, via the use of its surplus savings reserve, it has a balanced budget for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and thus does not need to make any reactionary cuts to services in these years. However, the Council does continue to have a substantial saving requirement in year three, so does need to be considering now, how this gap is to be bridged in order to achieve a balanced budget for 2022-23 and beyond. The Council's main focus in doing this remains the commercial agenda, but other options as discussed in section 13 of my report will need to be considered.

And one final point if I may, Members will have noted throughout my report the uncertainty of funding beyond 2020-21, with both the Government Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review. The budget presented details a reasonably prudent view of the possible outcome of these exercises, but with no certainty it is possible that 2021-22 could be better or worse than detailed in these papers, I will of course be monitoring this situation during the coming months and provide members with updates as new information becomes available.'

The recommendations in the submitted report were moved by Councillor Bailey and seconded by Councillor J Schumann. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bailey, spoke as follows in support of the Budget:

'The Council exists only to serve our residents, the people who pay for it. Our plan for the four-year term is built on their priorities that they gave us in the elections in May last year. I am proud of our staff who embrace what we ask them to do with a 'can-do' attitude in pursuit of providing the best possible services to our residents. It is a pleasure to work with them and I thank each and every one of them for all they do.

Residents asked us to be more commercial, but they told us to be reasonable about it! That is exactly what we are doing - being commercial for community benefit. East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) is wholly owned by the council for the benefit of residents. It manages the district's parks and open spaces, Ely Markets and the

development of new homes, many of which are provided through Community Land Trusts (CLTs) at genuinely affordable prices and are reserved for local working people.

We are currently on-site in Haddenham where the first of 19 new CLT owned homes, including bungalows, will be ready for occupation by local people this summer. These CLT homes will provide a lasting legacy of homes for local people in perpetuity as well as an income for the village. We are also on-site in Ely at the ex-MoD housing site, bringing all the empty properties back into use, some of which are already occupied, and 15 of which will be reserved for local working people as shared equity CLT homes. We will shortly be submitting a planning application, as we are contractually required to do by the MoD, for the infill housing on the site, more than 30% of which will be affordable housing, reserved for local working people in a CLT.

The company has done everything that we asked of it, and more, delivering to its business plan with a striking level of exactitude. The Markets continue to deliver a busy, vibrant programme and have been able to make capital investments whilst still returning a profit. The Parks & Open Spaces Team has delivered a £100k reduction in the costs to the Council for its services in 2020/21, due to it being free to provide paid for, quality services to other organisations. In December the company made a partial repayment of £1.7m of the £4.62m loan it has from the Council, repaid 15 months early. It has provided over £1.6m of financial benefit to the council to date, allowing us to keep investing in great services for residents and to keep our share of council tax low.

And the new Hive Leisure Centre is performing to its business plan, running at cost neutral to the Council as planned, and providing a surplus back to the Council.

Our bid for business rates pooling in 2020/21 was successful, and we negotiated with other Councils for an advantageous share for East Cambs and Fenland, meaning East Cambs is set to receive over £400k that it wouldn't have otherwise had. To put that into context, 1% Council Tax rise raises roughly £42k for the Council.

I am delighted and proud to say that we are therefore still in the position of being able to balance the council's budget for the next two years, which also means I have the pleasure of confirming that our Conservative budget will, is once again proposing to freeze the East Cambs element of council tax for the coming year. This is the seventh consecutive year we have frozen council tax for local people. Our management costs are the lowest in the county, running at just about half that of any of the other District Councils.

We know that changes are coming - Fairer funding, the Comprehensive Spending Review, business rates retention changes. So, just as we

always have done in the past, we are looking now to our budget gaps in years 3 and 4 of the MTFS.

I welcome the additional support from the Conservative Government for our High Streets, with the increase to 50% discount on business rates for premises with lower rateable values – this will benefit many of our independent small businesses.

This year will also see further efforts to help local people wanting to get onto the property ladder. Working with the Combined Authority we will begin delivering a hugely innovative new project: £100k Homes - offering 100% freehold ownership of quality one bedroom properties for £100k at nil cost to tax payers.

East Cambs Street Scene is a huge success story. Set up in 2018 to run the council's waste, recycling and street cleaning services, it is now providing a gold standard service to our residents. This year will see them expanding their offer to begin collections of commercial waste.

We have supported projects with CIL funding at nil cost to tax payers:

- £165,000 to Ely Museum
- £250,000 to Burwell rec
- £1,000,000 to Ely Southern Bypass
- £280k to the Soham Mill project

March will see our district-wide consultation on bus services and cycling and walking infrastructure - a great cross party effort. Whilst not in the direct remit of the District Council, we are determined to ensure our residents get a better deal on alternative forms of transport as the Combined Authority makes decisions about the future of transport across Cambridgeshire.

Perhaps most pressing of all, we are focusing efforts to tackle climate change and the effects on our environment. Together with our County Council and Combined Authority colleagues we are playing our part in delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050; I look forward to the draft Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan coming to Committee in April.

Thank you to Ian for his excellent report and thanks to the whole management team for its careful management of the budget. Thanks to all staff that make this Council what it is - I am truly proud to be involved.'

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Dupré and seconded by Councillor Wilson as follows:

The Liberal Democrat Group propose the following amendments to the budget presented in the agenda papers for this meeting:

1. ADD a cost to establish a Strategic Planning Committee of £8,500 per annum.
2. ADD a cost to employ a Climate Change Liaison Officer of £34,370 per annum.
3. INCREASE Council Tax by 1 per cent in 2020/21.

The overall impact of the additional spend will be neutralised by the increase in Council Tax.

Speaking to the amendment, Councillor Dupré stated that the Local Plan was 5 years old with no date for review. Government Housing Policy was changing and a new Local Transport Plan was nearing completion. Therefore, this Council needed to update its Local Plan, requiring a dedicated Committee to undertake this role. In addition, dedicated support was needed to progress the Council's climate change agenda and provide assistance to local parishes in this area via the Neighbourhood Planning process. She commended the modest proposals.

The Leader of the Council expressed disappointment at the last minute nature of the Liberal Democrat Budget amendment, which meant that it was impractical to give proper consideration to it. Therefore, she had requested Officers to bring forward Constitutional proposals to Council to prevent such a situation arising in the future. With regard to the individual proposals in the amendment, Councillor Bailey commented that an excellent officer resource was available in relation to climate change via the Strategic Planning Service Level Agreement, which could be called upon, as necessary. She did not believe that there was a requirement for a dedicated Strategic Planning Committee, as this role was being discharged via the Finance and Assets Committee. The Liberal Democrat Budget amendment represented a proposal to spend more unnecessarily, which was why she could not support it.

Other Members commented that since the Council had declared a climate emergency, it needed to take meaningful action on this. Therefore, this Council required a dedicated climate change officer to engage with other authorities and agencies and to support smaller parishes on the climate change agenda, if it was serious in its intentions on the issue. A dedicated Strategic Planning Committee also was required, rather than a Working Group of a Policy Committee which already had a high volume of business, and there were examples of Councils where having a dedicated Strategic Planning Committee had worked well. Many Parishes were highly critical of the level of unwelcome developments resulting from the lack of a robust Local Plan.

In accordance with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: (11) – Cllrs Cane, Charlesworth, Downey, Dupré, Harries, Inskip, Jones, Trapp, A Whelan, C Whelan and Wilson.

AGAINST: (13) – Cllrs C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Bovingdon, Brown, Every, Hunt, D Schumann, J Schumann, Sharp, Starkey, Stubbs and Webber.

ABSTENTIONS: (1) – Cllr Austen.

The amendment was declared to be lost.

In the debate on the Motion, a Member expressed concern regarding the political decision not to increase Council Tax, which meant that more income needed to be generated from commercial activities by the Council, which caused conflicts of interest between the Council's trading companies its role as a Planning authority. Reference was made to the huge Budget deficit in the future, with no reserves left to meet it, requiring increasingly ingenious schemes to balance the books. The commercialisation agenda monetarised everything and standards should not be lowered to fill the gap. Action was needed now to plan for the predicted deficit in 3 years time.

Other Members commented that the Finance and Assets Committee received well researched and comprehensive reports on issues within its remit and could draw on the support and advice of professional officers, as required. The Council had frozen Council Tax for 7 years, but had improved services and retained adequate Reserves, which was a testament to the foresight and professionalism of the officers.

In summing-up, Councillor Bailey stated that residents wanted the Council to be commercial but for the community benefit. This was the driving objective for both ECTC and ECSS. ECSS had generated savings of £250K from not having to undertake a procurement exercise and was providing excellent service standards. ECTC was providing high quality homes and affordable housing via the developments at Barton Road, Ely, Soham and Haddenham. Both companies had comprehensive Business Plans. Councillor Bailey commended this well-run Council with excellent staff.

In accordance with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the Motion, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: (13) – Cllrs C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Bovingdon, Brown, Every, Hunt, D Schumann, J Schumann, Sharp, Starkey, Stubbs and Webber.

AGAINST: (11) – Cllrs Cane, Charlesworth, Downey, Dupré, Harries, Inskip, Jones, Trapp, A Whelan, C Whelan and Wilson.

ABSTENTIONS: (1) – Cllr Austen.

The motion was declared to be carried.

It was resolved:

That approval be given to:

- The formal Council Tax Resolution which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report (circulated separately).
- The draft 2020/21 Revenue Budget and MTFs for 2021/22 to 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report.
- A Council Tax freeze.
- The Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.
- The 2020/21 Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 4 of the submitted report.
- The Capital Programme and financing as set out in Appendix 5 of the submitted report.
- The awarding of discretionary Business Rate relief as set out in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 of the submitted report.

67. **ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP (ARP) REVISED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

Council considered a report, U186 previously circulated, containing a proposed revised Partnership Agreement for Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP).

It was resolved:

That the revised Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Agreement as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

68. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21**

Council considered a report, U187 previously circulated, detailing the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

The HR Manager stated that the ratio between the highest grade and lowest grade at the scale minimum pay point was 1:7.1 and at the maximum pay point was 1:7.4.

It was resolved:

That the 2020/21 Pay Policy Statement be approved and adopted.

69. **COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORTS**
a. **OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2019**
b. **JANUARY 2020**

Council received reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's appointees.

It was resolved:

That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's appointees be noted.

70. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of public were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

71. **EXEMPT MINUTES – 17 OCTOBER 2019**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 10.38pm.

Chairman.....

Date

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Agenda Item 9 - Call-In of decision made at Operational Services Committee 20 January 2020 – Review of Grant to Citizen's Advice Rural Cambridgeshire

Anita Mills - Volunteer

Is it right that tax payers will have to pay much more to East Cambs to fund people they are going to employ rather than fund the Citizens Advice Service the £47,000 that is being withdrawn? I have also spoken to many people who would not go to East Cambs for advice as they do not feel the service will be confidential and just.

Karl Relton – Chair of Trustees, Ely Foodbank

Question: Is the council short-sighted or long-sighted?

We understand that the basis of the decision to cut funding to CA includes a growing 'in house' solution and the allocation of some 'special' central govt funds to further develop these 'in house' services. Whilst we all want to benefit from special central govt funds, we all know that such funds will be available for how long? One, two ... I guess three years tops? Then what happens? The council will no doubt have a budget headache, and this newly developed service will be in the firing line to be trimmed back. [Remember the same thing happened with Childrens Centres at county level].

Meanwhile, the cut to CA funding will have meant that the council has dis-invested in an independent, resilient, nationally recognised 'go-to' brand for the average member of public.

The long-sighted approach would be to realise the value & continuity to residents that the CA provides, and have the foresight to continue investing in such provision ... so that it can thrive in conjunction with 'in house' services, and continue even after the council or other services have come and gone.

So to repeat, I want to ask: is the council short-sighted or long?

Revd Robert Ely and Mrs Teresa Ely

The CARC has years of experience and a wealth of volunteers skilled at dealing with clients in an impartial way and enjoys the confidence of those who seek help. How does the Council envisage providing a similar service?

Chris Prescott - Volunteer

Q1. Does the cost to the Council of four new full-time staff include National Insurance Contributions, pension costs and healthcare costs. If not, what is the additional cost of these?

Q2. Please advise why the following disadvantages, or potential disadvantages, of the proposal were not listed under Option 3, which recommended acceptance of the proposal.

- No exploration of options for better collaboration (see option 2)
- High level of disruption to service
- No access to customer histories held by CARC
- Lack of independence of ECDC
- Government funding uncertain and may be withdrawn
- Short-term (2 year) commitment
- No track record in the services not previously delivered
- Loss of value of volunteer time input (£31,046 pa)
- Damage to morale in voluntary sector
- Reputational damage to ECDC (see option 1)
- Alternative possible uses of central government funding not explored
- Increased cost to ECDC
- Reduced choice for customers

Q3. How many hours did the community hubs operate for in 2018-19?

Q4. With reference to the document Call-in Update Briefing, in what sense, during preparation of the Review of the CARC grant, were “all residents [given] the opportunity to engage with the Council and have their say regarding the services and resources that they need” as claimed at para 1.14.

Pat Del Grazia – Advice Service Leader

Q. Do you complete disability forms (DLA, PIP, AA) and assist with challenging or appealing failed benefit decisions? Do you do What-If benefit calculations for people with an impending change of circumstances?

Anita Mills - Volunteer

Q. Do you help complete court forms such as for a small claims or defences?

Linda Spiers - Volunteer

Q. "Paragraph 4.2.3 of the document presented to the Occupational Committee lists a number of areas of support and advice provided to residents by the Council. All of these areas are also provided by Citizens Advice in Ely, but are not listed in the services described as being provided by CAB locally in paragraph 4.2.2. Given that, can Councillors trust the information given to them in this document and its appendices about the supposed relative weakness of CAB's services?"

Penny Taylor – Volunteer

Q. If you were presented with a client with an employment issue for example dismissal, what level of advice and support would you be able to offer? Would you help with challenging an unfair dismissal decision?

Response from Leader of the Council, Councillor Anna Bailey:

We carried out this review with the aim to improve the service to meet the needs of the community. Whilst not every aspect of the review was put in the report, I can assure you that everything was considered. Delivery of an excellent service to the community is at the heart of our decisions. We engage with the community through user feedback and there is always opportunity for residents to make suggestions on service improvements.

Whilst there will be an increased cost to deliver this enhanced service, these costs will be met from a ringfenced grant from central government. The fact that we are prepared to invest more money in to the service shows the commitment we are making to the community.

The Council has taken a long-term view for ensuring that it can deliver a holistic and well-rounded service to the community and we are confident that this is sustainable now and in to the future.

We have a team of dedicated staff here who are already delivering many elements of the service and we have a plan to recruit more as the ambition is for the public to have as much access as possible to a multi skilled service.

The Council has already established community hubs in Ely, Littleport, Stretham and Earith and is due to establish community hubs in Sutton, Soham and Bottisham. We are actively working to set out hubs in as many areas as possible. Where residents do not feel comfortable coming to the Council they will be able to go to the community hubs which contain multiple agencies to assist with their needs.

There were a few questions that were very specific, I just want to answer some of those

To Chris Prescott, we did factor on-costs into the posts and the cost of this is detailed in the Operational Services Committee report. The community hubs were open for 280 hours in 2018-19 and we also had the drop-in service at the Council Offices and will go to people's homes as well.

To Pat Del Grazia and Anita Mills - We absolutely deal with assisting our residents to deal with a whole range of different and complex forms on a wide range of issues, particularly the ones you mention.

We considered all of the elements you have highlighted in your questions and I just want to be clear to everyone here tonight, this isn't about whether CARC were delivering a 'weak' service. We value the service that CARC provides to the community. This is about ensuring that the residents of East Cambs have more access to services that meet their changing needs.