



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Minutes of the Meeting of East Cambridgeshire  
District Council held in the Council Chamber,  
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday  
19 April 2018 at 6.00pm

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### **P R E S E N T**

Councillor Peter Cresswell (Chairman)	
Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor Christine Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor David Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Chris Morris
Councillor Derrick Beckett	Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor David Brown	Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor David Chaplin	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Steve Cheetham	Councillor Mathew Shuter
Councillor Paul Cox	Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Mark Goldsack	

#### 80. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were submitted.

#### 81. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allan, Austen, Bradley, Griffin-Singh, Huffer, Pearson, Roberts, D Schumann and J Schumann.

#### 82. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bailey made a declaration of Interest in respect of agenda item number 14 as she was a Member of the Board of the East Cambs Trading Company.

#### 83. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Dupré asked, in reference to minute number 77, whether there was any information from the Combined Authority relating to the bus timetable review, that had not been reported back. The Chief Executive explained that he was still awaiting the final details, which would be forwarded once received.

84. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Former District Councillor Alan White

Since the Council's last meeting, Members would have received the sad news that former District Councillor Alan White had passed away. He had been a conscientious and loyal Member of this Council from its formation in 1973 until 2007, representing the Downham Villages.

A minute's silence was held to commemorate former Councillor White.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Bailey to pay her own tribute. Councillor Bailey stated that former Councillor White had given a full and dedicated service and had worked on many committees from 1973 to 2007, with two stints as a Committee Chairman. Quite simply he was always around and did so much work for Little Downham. He was heavily involved in the conversion of the school and was often seen mowing the verges. He had given a long service to the village and it would be hard to think of the village without him and things would not be the same.

Members' Seminar – Ouse Washes and Flood Risk in the Area

The Council was reminded that Councillor Bradley had arranged for Mr Phil Burrows of the Environment Agency and Mr Andrew Newton of the Internal Drainage Boards to give presentations at the seminar scheduled for Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

This followed the Motion agreed at the last Council meeting. Members were urged to attend that important seminar and to let Democratic Services know whether they intended to attend, if they had not already done so.

Annual Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Members were also reminded that the annual reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies for 2017/18 had been due for return by 29<sup>th</sup> March, but a number were still outstanding. Members were asked to complete and return them to Janis Murfet, Democratic Services Officer, as soon as possible.

### Ely Country Park

The Council had successfully obtained Natural England Country Park accredited status for Ely Country Park. This meant recognition of the site's high quality facilities and services, it would be promoted to the public via Natural England's national publicity media and it could use the Natural England logo and branding. This achievement reflected the fantastic work of the volunteers and would help applications for funding. Congratulations were offered to all those involved.

### Chairman's Civic Reception

Finally, a personal reminder from the Chairman that the Chairman's Reception would take place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Granary Barns, Woodditton. The Chairman hoped Members would be able to join him that evening.

### Members' Site Visit

Members were reminded that a visit to G's in Barway would be held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April. Any Members able to join the party should advise Rebecca Findlay, Marketing Officer in Economic Development, and let her know their shoe size.

## 85. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

## 86. **MOTIONS**

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Bailey and seconded by Cllr Hunt:

### Purge on Plastics

This Council endorses the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" including the commitment to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042.

The Council acknowledges it has an important part to play in meeting these ambitious targets by taking action now to act as an exemplar for public, private, voluntary bodies and individual members of the community.

This Council commits itself to reduce the reliance on Single – Use plastics across the District.

The Council is committed to a 'Purge on Plastics' by 'leading from the front' by working towards the removal of all consumer single use plastics in our workplace.

The Council will continue to make it easier for people to recycle, building on the success of the second blue recycling bin.

The Council repeats its commitment to achieving a 60% recycling rate in our district.

The Council will work positively with residents and businesses in our area to promote our 'Purge on Plastics'.

To this end, the Council approves the Statement of Intent attached and instructs the Chief Executive to provide an Annual Statement to Council on our progress in achieving these objectives.

Councillor Dupré tabled and proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Whelan, to revise the final paragraph of the motion to read:

To this end, the Council approves the Statement of Intent attached, **instructs officers to prepare a draft action plan for consideration by the Regulatory Services Committee** and instructs the Chief Executive to provide an Annual Statement to Council on our progress in achieving these objectives.

Councillor Dupré stated that this was a simple amendment and it was intended to be helpful. The intention of the Council needed an action plan to log the actions being taken, with the annual report giving an update on those actions. The action plan would be drawn up by officers and considered by the Regulatory Services Committee to give it Member approval. This would help with governance and tracking progress.

Councillor Bailey was pleased that Councillor Dupré was enthusiastic about the motion but thought she had misunderstood it. The Statement of Intent was meant to help change the organisation not to produce a large document covering the issue. Therefore she could not support the amendment.

Councillor Whelan considered the need for an action plan was apparent, so the Council could lead by example. If there was no action plan then the motion said nothing about how the Council could lead on the issue. The action plan would set out a strategic plan on what the Council intended to do.

Councillor Dupré considered that there was some misunderstanding of the amendment, as the action plan was not expected to consist of a lot of documents or be bureaucratic. It would be clear and straight forward to do and would allow monitoring of progress. Not including it would indicate the Council was not committed enough to the issue.

On being put to the vote, the Amendment was declared lost.

Councillor Bailey, in speaking for the motion, revealed that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic had been produced with only 9% being recycled during 2015 and only 12% incinerated. Worldwide 1 million plastic bottles were bought every second and if placed end-to-end would stretched around the earth 31 times. This was damaging the environment and society needed to change to stop it.

The bullet points of the motion showed the actions the Council would be prepared to take. These were small everyday acts that would collectively give the help the planet needed. A start had to be made somewhere and the Council should regularly test how it was doing. It would not be easy but the Council had to keep going to achieve the correct behaviour.

A special mention was made of the Markets Team, which were changing shopping habits by reducing the amount people purchased in one go through the introduction of the mini-markets and using re-usable bags.

Councillor Shuter thought the motion was fantastic, which would concentrate the mind on this issue. Glass bottles used to be collected and recycled and the Government had recently looked at this matter. Plastic balloons in particular were especially damaging to the environment and dangerous to animals. Legislation would be used to try to tackle the problems with plastic but the message needed to be put out to help change peoples' attitudes.

Councillor Hobbs was very much in support of the motion and concurred that the markets had shown the way forward. People could buy small quantities of goods and the mini-markets were wished success.

Councillor Dupré was pleased to see that the Council was heading down this path, however the intention to ban plastics by 2042, which was a long way off, showed no ambition. This was why the action plan had been proposed to give stretch targets to aim for. The motion did not specify what the Council wanted to do, although it did talk about recycling rates. These could be substantially increased through more green waste, though it would be better for people to compost at home. The second 'blue bin' was a very good idea if it diverted more materials to recycling. More waste was being collected but the volumes not being recycled had increased by 11%, which was a significant amount. The figures for this should also be tracked, not just the 60% recycling rate targets. The motion lacked ambition but would be supported as far as it went.

Councillor Hunt disclosed that this issue had been brought up at the recent Commonwealth summit, due to concerns that the planet was suffering. Putting waste into pits could not continue and minds had to be focussed locally and nationally to deal with the problem. This was just the start of that journey and some failures could be expected but the Council had to continue to change. It would not be quick or easy to do this but this was the route that needed to be taken. The requirement for the Chief Executive to report back on progress was

a plan and modest targets should be set that could be delivered, rather than lofty unachievable targets.

Councillor Whelan revealed that only 1 in 40 disposable coffee cups were currently being recycled. It was nice to see that the Council had changed its coffee machines, which was a start. Local supermarkets were also taking action, which was good to see. Although the motion was welcomed it could have been so much better, if the proposed amendment had been included.

Councillor Bailey thought the success of the motion would be proven by its results. 2042 was a national target and the motion showed the Council was absolutely committed to purging plastics. The Council acknowledged the important role it would take to help meet the targets. This would be achieved by changing the core behaviour of the organisation.

The 'blue bin' scheme was going satisfactorily and was working well, which would help recycling rates. East Cambs Street Scene also had an enormously ambitious programme to increase those rates and would be looking at a programme of education.

The Statement of Intent set out the Council's ambition and the motion was recommended for approval.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously, therefore

It was resolved:

- (i) That this Council endorses the Government's "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment" including the commitment to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042.
- (ii) That the Council acknowledges it has an important part to play in meeting these ambitious targets by taking action now to act as an exemplar for public, private, voluntary bodies and individual members of the community.
- (iii) That this Council commits itself to reduce the reliance on Single – Use plastics across the District.
- (iv) The Council is committed to a 'Purge on Plastics' by 'leading from the front' by working towards the removal of all consumer single use plastics in our workplace.
- (v) That the Council will continue to make it easier for people to recycle building on the success of the second blue recycling bin.
- (vi) That the Council repeats its commitment to achieving a 60% recycling rate in our district.

- (vii) That the Council will work positively with residents and businesses in our area to promote our 'Purge on Plastics'.
- (viii) That the Council approves the Statement of Intent attached and instructs the Chief Executive to provide an Annual Statement to Council on our progress in achieving these objectives.

87. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

No questions from Members were received.

88. **PRESENTATION – OPPORTUNITIES FUND**

Councillor Every stated that results from schools in East Cambridgeshire had been bad for a long time. Things were improving though not fast enough. Youngsters who did not achieve their best would not achieve success in later life. Educated youngsters were needed to fill jobs so a Government initiative had been launched in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, as they had been designated as an 'opportunities' area. £7 million had been allocated to raise attainment levels.

Tricia Pritchard, Chairman of the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunities Area Board, then gave a presentation and made the following comments:

- East Cambridgeshire and Fenland had been chosen due to their poor standing in the Social Mobility Index, with East Cambridgeshire 311<sup>th</sup> out of 324 and Fenland 319<sup>th</sup>.
- There was a considerable gap in attainment levels.
- £7 million had been given for a three-year period and this also would allow priority to obtain other Government funding.
- A Partnership Board would engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including school heads, employers and the National Health Service, to produce a Delivery Plan.
- Littleport Primary School had been designated as a Research School, the only Opportunity Area with one, and would receive extra support.
- The aims were to support and change the schools, raise pupils' expectations, provide equal opportunities, ensure youngsters were equipped with suitable skills and overcome the barriers to learning.
- The agenda was ambitious, with a focus on the pupils who were facing the most barriers, and input was wanted from the Council.
- A no excuse/no blame culture was attempting to be installed with a positive approach promoted.
- A number of priorities had been agreed which included accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils through communication, overcoming barriers to learning, supporting pupils with mental health issues, raising aspirations and fair access to learning pathways.

- East Cambridgeshire needed a long-term strategy for 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision.
- Extending the opportunities for participation in extra curricula activities would be explored.
- The best teachers needed to be retained, as this was a more acute problem in this region than elsewhere.
- The agenda was big with a lot of challenges to face with communication high on the list.
- The Council was asked for its help by spreading the word and helping change the negativity against the programme.

Councillor D Ambrose Smith asked what role school governors would play and how the programme would be tracked and evaluated. In response it was explained that school governors were key people in the process and would be consulted. The two Members of Parliament representing the area had also been hugely supportive and would be invited to take part.

Councillor Bailey thought the project was hugely exciting and raising aspirations was vital. The brightest kids were currently reluctant to put themselves forward and what was being done to encourage that? Ms Pritchard had met the students already and would continue to engage the youth, perhaps through a youth forum or board.

Councillor Beckett was pleased to hear what was happening but questioned how 6<sup>th</sup> formers in Isleham would be able to access transport, which was a big problem. In reply it was revealed that the money was ring-fenced but sustainable transport issues were being looked at.

Councillor Whelan was also pleased to see the ideas going ahead and stressed the importance of early years education, as youngsters learnt how to learn before the age of 7, so this needed to be right.

The Chairman thanked Ms Pritchard for her presentation.

*The meeting adjourned at this point, 7:02pm.  
Councillor Every left the meeting at this point.*

*The meeting re-convened at 7:07pm.*

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

Council considered a report S284, previously circulated, containing items recommended from Committees and other Member bodies.

### **RESOURCES & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2018**

#### **Representation on Internal Drainage Boards**



Councillor Brown proposed, Councillor Sharp seconded, the recommendations of the Resources and Finance Committee for approval.

Councillor Dupré asked how the Chief Executive decided who the relevant parish councils were relating to the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). The list of vacancies in Appendix 1 included 5 for Cawdle Fen IDB and 3 for Padnal IDB. That would be a lot of vacancies for the parish of Ely to cover. For the Swaffham IDB there was only 1 vacancy but this was covered by 5 parishes. So which parishes would be deemed relevant and how would the parishes organise representation? Why would the parish councils be asked to fill the vacancies rather than District Councillors suggesting people who might be interested?

*Councillor Every returned to the meeting at this point, 7:10pm.*

Councillor Dupré continued and stated her disappointment that people who had expressed an interest had not be contacted. It was pleasing that this matter was being taken more seriously than before, but it was not clear that the advantages of devolving representation to the parishes was better than nominating district councillors.

The Chief Executive explained that the relevant parishes were those that fitted in with part of the IDBs boundaries and the Swaffham map would be checked. This Council did appoint to some, but not all, of the available positions. Some covered multiple or single parishes and all would be written to and reported back to the Resources and Finance Committee, who would make the appointments.

Councillor Alderson noted that the report stated there were 3 vacancies for the Swaffham IDB but 1 was not vacant as he had been a member of it for 10 years. Councillor Dupré then asked that vacancy be confirmed. The Chief Executive confirmed the vacancy but reminded Members that Councillor Alderson could be appointed to it. The Swaffham IDB would be written to as a matter of priority to seek clarification.

It was resolved:

That in the event of any vacancies unfilled the Chief Executive be instructed to write to the relevant Parish Councils to seek nominations to the Internal Drainage Boards and report back to the Resources and Finance Committee.

## 90. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Council considered a report, S285, previously circulated, requesting a Community Governance Review be conducted.

The Electoral Services Team Leader advised the Council that the first consultation period had closed on 16<sup>th</sup> April. A number of comments had been received relating to proposals affecting Witchford, Sutton, Mepal, Witcham,

Haddenham, Wilburton, Wentworth, Ely and Little Downham. This included 2 requests from District Councillors. The final draft proposals of the Review within the report were recommended for a final consultation.

Councillor Bailey offered thanks to the Electoral Services Team Leader and her colleagues for their work on this and for the Members' seminar. They had demonstrated a forensic knowledge of the district and had picked up on the weird anomalies within it. A piece of land identified in the Local Plan absolutely belonged to Mepal parish and it was important that this was tidied up and included.

Councillor Hunt thought the Electoral Services Team Leader had done a wonderful job in discovering all the oddities in the district, which had been around for so long it was laughable. It was difficult to explain some of these situations but they had now been put right.

The Chairman also offered his appreciation for the work done on this difficult task which had been completed expertly.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the draft proposals of the Community Governance Review to be published for consultation on 20 April 2018 be approved;
- (ii) That it be noted that the consultation period had now closed for the Polling District Review and the final recommendations would be considered at Full Council in July.

91. **ACTION TAKEN BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON GROUNDS OF URGENCY – CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY DRAFT BORROWING STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

Council considered a report, S286 previously circulated, giving details of the action taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency.

Councillor Dupré noted that Cambridgeshire County Council had convened a meeting to assent to the issue, whereas this Council did not. In view of consenting to, there must of have been awareness that the East Cambs Trading Company would be one of the first beneficiaries.

Councillor David Brown thought Councillor Dupré had made a good point but this had been an urgent matter. The Council's Constitution stated that this issue could be dealt with as it had, so it was up to Council to amend the Constitution if it discontent.

It was resolved:

That the action taken by the Chief Executive on grounds of urgency be noted.

92. **COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORTS**  
**a. February 2018**  
**b. March 2018**

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

The Chairman thanked Councillor Dupré for the questions submitted prior to the meeting and advised the Council that a set of responses were tabled.

It was resolved:

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

*Councillor Bailey left the meeting at this point, 7:30pm.*

93. **EAST CAMBS TRADING COMPANY LTD – AUTHORITY TO BORROW**

Council considered a report, S287 previously circulated, seeking to grant the East Cambs Trading Company Ltd the authority to borrow from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The Chief Executive advised the Council that agreement to authorise borrowing was required by the Shareholder Agreement. Securing a loan for the East Cambs Trading Company would allow it to fund the housing scheme in Haddenham and the overall Community Land Trust (CLT) programme. A significant investment in time had been spent in putting forward this proposal, which was subject to more scrutiny as it was the first. The requirements to secure the loan would not directly affect the finances of the Council. Further loans from the Combined Authority could help secure the delivering of around 1850 houses in the district.

Councillor Derrick Beckett expressed concern about the possible liability to the Council for the £6.5 million. If the projected sale of new houses fell short of the budgeted figures who would be responsible for funding the gap? How were the sales for the Stretham CLT development progressing? CLTs were a good way of providing homes for local people. The question mainly related to safeguarding the Council.

The Chief Executive explained that currently the Heads of Terms, including security of funding, were being negotiated but would not include a guarantee from the Council to the Trading Company. The Trading Company had to manage the risks for the Haddenham scheme. If the £6.5 million was exceeded the Trading Company would meet the extra costs from its existing finances, which included the loan facility from this Council.

Councillor Hunt thought there appeared to be a bit of confusion relating to the Haddenham CLT development. This money was not a grant but a cash

flow solution to get things moving. The Haddenham site had obtained planning permission so a substantial value had been added to it. The residents of Haddenham would be pleased that this money would speed things up, as they would not want it delayed.

Councillor Dupré could not support this arrangement as it was the first time Members had an opportunity to debate the level of the loans. This was a ten-fold increase and the Shareholder Committee had no chance to discuss or consider the matter, particularly as its last meeting had been cancelled. The level of risk and indebtedness were most important factors and the Council had to have a measure of control. A chance to discuss about the debt and how big the Trading Company wanted to get had been thrown away.

The second recommendation in the report would mean that 1 officer and 1 Councillor could take on unlimited debt without reference to Council or Members. This was an absolute abnegation of the Shareholder Committee's responsibilities. This was not about the details of the Haddenham arrangements but about Council monitoring and control. Therefore, the recommendations could not be supported.

Councillor Hugo reminded the Members that the Council was supposed to have a 'can do' attitude. CLTs were the flagships for providing housing for local people. Other CLTs needed to be developed in alignment with the Combined Authority. The alternative to this loan would be a commercial loan which would be much more expensive. The Haddenham Board consisted of Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Independent Members who were all totally committed to completing this development.

The Chief Executive asked the Council to approve the £6.5 million loan and further loans, including the proposed £40 million, which would still be dependent on a number of factors and only related to loans from the Combined Authority.

Councillor Sharp clarified that the Council was only there as a lender and would not be giving a grant. This borrowing was to help the building of homes. The concerns of Councillor Beckett were understood but the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Combined Authority had debated the issue and accepted it was a risk. The recommendations were worth supporting.

Councillor Brown expected that the Combined Authority would not be willing to take on unlimited loans and would look at other organisations pitching for their money.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the East Cambs Trading Company Ltd be authorised to enter into a loan agreement with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as detailed in Appendix 1;

- (ii) That the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Resources and Finance Committee, be authorised to authorise the East Cambs Trading Company Ltd to enter into further loan agreements with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, specifically in relation to the Strategic Community Land Trust Programme.

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

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items 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 1, 2 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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

Council considered an Exempt report S288, previously circulated, containing items recommended from Committees and other Member bodies.

**Mepal Outdoor Centre Working Party**

Councillor Hunt explained the work of the Working Party in relation to making the Mepal Outdoor Centre operational again. The facility had been loved by children but had fallen into disrepair and had suffered vandalism. It was costing the Council money to maintain it so it had been decided to find a solution. The Working Party had been through the process and now presented its recommendation to Council and asked for its support.

Councillor Bailey thanked the Working Party and officers involved who had come up with good proposals. This was hugely exciting as the Outdoor Centre could be a fantastic facility. The Chairman added his thanks for all the hard work done.

It was resolved:

That the recommendation of the Mepal Outdoor Centre Working Party be approved.

The meeting concluded at 7.58pm.