



Minutes of the Meeting of East Cambridgeshire  
District Council held in the Council Chamber,  
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday  
13 July 2017 at 6.00pm

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

Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh
Councillor Christine Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Neil Hitchin
Councillor David Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Derrick Beckett	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Mike Bradley	Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor David Chaplin	Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor Steve Cheetham	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Paul Cox	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Peter Cresswell (Chairman)	Councillor Mathew Shuter
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Mark Goldsack	

### 16. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were submitted.

### 17. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Allan, Austen, Green, Huffer, Morris, and Sennitt.

### 18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interests were received.

### 19. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 were received.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. **SOHAM NORTH WARD BY-ELECTION RESULT**

Council considered a report, S51 previously circulated, detailing the result of the Soham North By-Election held on 22 June 2017 and the allocation of seats on Committees, etc, arising therefrom. Members noted that Councillor Mark Goldsack had been elected to the vacancy and had given notification that he wished to join the Conservative Group. As a result, there was no change to the allocation of places on Committees, etc, in accordance with the requirements of the Proportionality rules. The Conservative Group had given notification of changes to the membership of Committees, etc, detailed in an Appendix circulated to Members and tabled at Council.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Goldsack and expressed the hope that he would have a rewarding time as a Member of this Council. Members endorsed the Chairman's welcome with a round of applause.

It was resolved:

That the election of Councillor Mark Goldsack as a District Councillor for the Soham North Ward and changes to the membership of Committees, etc, detailed in the Appendix tabled at Council, be noted.

21. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following announcements were made by the Chairman:

'First and foremost, my sincere thanks to you my Council colleagues for the confidence you showed in me, in electing me as Chairman at the Annual Meeting. I apologise again for being unavailable that evening. I consider it an honour and a privilege to serve as Chairman of the Council again, and I undertake to serve you and the District to the very best of my ability.

Those who know me well will be aware that I place considerable importance upon communication, hence the re-birth of my newsletter 'Chairman's Chat'. Bearing in mind its wide circulation, I will always be open to suggestions, as to what you would like to see included.

During my term of office, I will be arranging a series of visits to local businesses for Council Members. The first of these will be on the morning of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September, when I have arranged for us to tour Dalham Hall Stud, which is the horse breeding empire of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed, the Ruler of Dubai. If this appeals to you, please make a note of the date in your diary. My PA, Lynne Smart, will be sending out details in due course and I will be compiling responses. Believe me, it is well worth a visit.

The Council's Civic Service will take place on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at St Andrews Church, Soham, at 3pm. This is an opportunity to give thanks for our good fortune for living and playing a part in public life, here in East Cambridgeshire. I hope I can count upon your support.

I will be planning the Chairman's Reception for later in the civic year. I hope to be able to announce details at our next meeting.

My chosen charity during the coming year will be the Alzheimer's Society. Whenever possible, I hope to raise funds for this very worthwhile charity, which provides care and research for people with dementia and their carers.'

22. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

23. **MOTIONS**

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Peter Cresswell and seconded by Cllr Hamish Ross:

'In acknowledgement of the highly successful and profitable events organised by the Tourism and Town Centres Team, this service be re-titled the Tourism, Town Centres and Events Service by the Council and thanks be conveyed to the staff who have worked tirelessly to make these events so successful.'

Speaking on his motion, the Chairman made the following points:

'I regard this as an extremely valuable and important service, and I feel the Council should recognise it as such.

The value of tourism to the district as a whole should not be underestimated.

But in particular, as far as the motion is concerned, I wish us to recognise how popular the events organised by this small team are. The numbers attending have increased considerably over the years and I have been impressed with the dedication and hard work of the team involved.

I also wish to acknowledge how fortunate we are in having such talented and hard working staff throughout the Council, and would ask the Chief Executive to write to them to convey our thanks to them all.'

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

24. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Derrick Beckett asked the following question regarding the Ely Southern Bypass:

Councillor Beckett apologised for the late notice of the question, but he only had become aware of the issue yesterday. He drew attention to fact that the completion of the Ely Southern Bypass was to be delayed by 3 months due to the requirement for changes to the electrical supply from overhead to underground cables. The District Council had contributed to the scheme and residents and Councillors were desperate to see it opened. Therefore, Councillor Beckett asked if representations could be made Cambridgeshire County Council to express this Council's concern at the delay and to enquire why the issues that had caused the delay had not been identified prior to the commencement of the works.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Charles Roberts, responded by stating that this seemed like a reasonable request, as the Bypass was a complex project and it seemed legitimate to ask for an explanation as to why the issue with the power cables had not been identified at an earlier stage.

Councillor Shuter stated that he had received a briefing on the issue as a County Councillor and it was not due to the County Council but due to UK Power Networks and Network Rail. The delay and additional costs were very regrettable.

The Chairman having put it to the Council, it was agreed that representations should be made to the County Council to register this Council's concern at the delay in the completion of the Bypass and request further explanation of the reasons for the delay.

25. **CORPORATE PLAN – END OF YEAR REPORT**

Council received a report, S52 previously circulated, and a copy of the Corporate Plan Priorities End of Year Council Report for 2016/17. The Chairman drew attention to the revised recommendations tabled at the meeting which were proposed by Councillor Roberts and seconded by Councillor Bailey:

That Council notes the progress against the Corporate Priorities of the Council as detailed within the End of Year Council Report 2016/17.

That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

The Chief Executive stated that the End of Year Council Report would be circulated to all households within the District around mid August 2017.

Councillor Dupré raised a number of questions on the End of Year Council Report as follows:

- The report referred to the commitment to a new GP Surgery as part of the Stretham CLT development - when would this be opened?
- Reference was made to new roundabouts/lanes – how many and where?
- Is the commitment to a new Soham Railway Station on-track?
- What is the position on the Ely Station Gateway?
- What is the cost of the printing and distribution of the End of Year Council Report to all households within the District and wouldn't this money be better to spend the Council's limited resources elsewhere?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roberts stated that Stretham CLT had identified land for a surgery and a meeting was to be held with the developer to discuss the delivery timetable, which would be dependent upon local Health Authority approvals.

Councillor Bailey thanked the Performance Officer, Hetty Thornton, for her work on the End of Year Council Report and commented that it was right that we should advise the Council Tax payers of the District of how the Council was performing on its priorities, all of which had been identified from consulting local residents as to what they wanted. The modest sum to print and distribute the report was justified to show how the Council was delivering on its promises. A new roundabout had been created at Angel Drove, Ely and new lane markings had been created for the A10 and new BP Garage roundabouts. The wording relating to Soham Railway Station in the End of Year Council Report clearly showed the role of this Council as a partner in the project, which was complex, detailed and would take time to deliver, but was progressing.

The Chairman also commended the Performance Officer, Hetty Thornton, for her work on the End of Year Council Report.

Upon being put to the vote, the revised recommendations were declared to be carried by a majority.

It was resolved:

1. That Council notes the progress against the Corporate Priorities of the Council as detailed within the End of Year Council Report 2016/17.

2. That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

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

Council considered a report, S53, previously circulated, containing items recommended from Committees as follows:

**a. LICENSING COMMITTEE – 17 MAY 2017**

**Market Street Taxi Rank Consultation**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Griffin-Singh, stated that the arguments for the various options were clearly documented in the report and the recommendations represented a good compromise solution which improved the service for the Taxi trade but did not reduce the overall number of parking spaces within Ely. Councillor Bill Hunt commended the Licensing Committee on a pragmatic solution which satisfied the demands of the Taxi trade whilst retaining parking spaces. He also drew attention to 5 additional parking spaces created in Newnham Street Car Park, Ely, meaning that there was a net gain in spaces. Councillor Bill Hunt expressed concern at the use of the pavement by some city centre businesses as an extension of their retail space to display goods and commented that this needed to be monitored to prevent hazards for the visually impaired, wheelchair and pushchair users, etc.

Councillor Dupré referred to the fact that a number of the comments in opposition to the extension of the Taxi Rank in Market Street had come from the ruling Group on the Council. She commented that Taxis also were a business and that there was currently an under-provision of ranks within the city. Councillor Dupré stated that she could not support the recommendations as she did not believe that the Market Street Taxi Rank should be swapped around until the outcome of the review had been completed.

Councillor Griffin-Singh responded by stating that the Committee already had put down a marker highlighting the under-provision of ranks within Ely, but the current issues would not be addressed if we awaited the outcome of the wider review.

It was resolved:

1. That the taxi rank and public parking bays in Market Street Ely be re-organised so that the taxi rank be moved along Market Street to the junction of Market Street and High Street Back and the public parking bays be relocated along Market Street towards Market Place.

2. That a review of city centre traffic management be conducted to include investigations into:
  - (a) the possibilities for potential sites within the city centre for a 'holding area' for hackney carriages; and
  - (b) the possibilities for taxi provision at the new leisure village.

**b. RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2017**

**(i) Review of Members' Allowances – Report of Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)**

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), Mr Richard Tyler, addressed the Council to explain the background and rationale for their recommendations as follows:

'I would like to thank the members of the panel, Margaret Clark, Stanley Curtis and Richard Powell who contributed enormously to the report, as also did Tracy Couper, the Democratic Services Manager, who gave us impartial advice throughout the proceedings.

I would also like to thank the council members who replied to our questionnaire and those who attended meetings with us. It helped us get an understanding of the work so many councillors put in to their role. We realised that the public do not understand how much time is needed to do the role properly and also the complexity of their duties. We hope that can be overcome by articles in the local press.

We felt that the cut in 2010 of 10% of the allowances, which was voluntary agreed by the councillors at that time, when the MP's expense scandal was at its highest, has hampered allowances ever since. We felt that should be restored before looking at the basic increase. We felt that it was a temporary measure. We can understand why it was not restored after the previous panel's report but now ECDC has got a balanced budget and it should now be restored. We calculated that for the majority of the councillors the allowance was considerably less than the minimum wage and, though it is not a "salary" and most councillors want to donate some of their time, it can prevent some new blood from coming onto the council. It was also noted that ECDC was well below the norm when compared to similar authorities.

There will be some changes when the boundary changes are made and the number of councillors will be reduced in 2019. Several councillors felt that they would not stand for a variety of reasons and a sensible level of allowances should be in place to

encourage new members both young and old, both sexes, and not just the self employed and pensioners.

The panel have set out its recommendations together with the rationale behind each one. Several councillors felt that they should not vote on their allowances, but unfortunately the law requires you to do this, and so the final decision rests with you. Again thanks to the rest of the panel, the Chief Executive, the councillors who assisted us and Tracy.'

A revised motion, tabled at the meeting, was proposed and seconded by Councillors Sharp and Roberts as follows:

1. That Council agree the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
2. That Council agree to maximise the level of allowances payable to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council to accord with any increase agreed in the level of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs).
3. That Council agree to amend the venue hire costs allowance for Members' surgeries (ref. Constitution 6(3)) to allocate up to a maximum of £100 per Member towards the costs of hiring venues for Member surgeries per annum.
4. That Council notes that there will be a reduction in the Budget for Members' allowances from May 2019 due to the reduction in the number of Councillors from 39 to 28 as a result of the Electoral Review.

Councillor Sharp thanked Mr Tyler and the IRP for their excellent report which had resulted from a great deal of research and discussion with Councillors.

Councillor Dupré proposed an amendment, that was not seconded, to amend paragraph 1 of the motion by adding 'to be implemented from May 2019' to the end of that paragraph. Councillor Dupré explained that she was requesting the amendment since the current levels of allowances had not deterred the existing cohort of Councillors from standing for election and the boundary changes which would result in larger Wards/workloads for Councillors would not take effect until 2019.

Councillor Shuter commented that it was distasteful that Councillors were obliged to vote on the level of their own remuneration and he was not aware of any other such situations where this happened in the public sector nationally. He believed that the public did not support such a situation either. Therefore, Central Government



should be lobbied to make the point that this was unacceptable and request the Government to set a national formula with an appropriate indexation factor.

Councillor Beckett concurred with Councillor Shuter's view above. He commented that he was a Councillor when the decision had been taken to cut the allowances due to the Budget situation of the Council, and he had believed that it was right at that time that Councillors should be seen to lead the way in making savings. However, for this review, he was one of the Councillors invited for interview by the Panel and this had caused him to think about the amount of time that he spent on his duties as a Councillor. He thanked the Panel for the gracious manner in which they had interviewed him and the thoughtful but probing nature of their questioning. As a result, he had been surprised and shocked at the number of hours he actually spent on these duties. Whilst Councillors usually came onto the Council to serve their local communities, and were willing to give time in voluntary service, they should not be disadvantaged in taking such a responsible role and the current remuneration levels were below minimum wage and even below many other Councils nationally. Therefore, Councillor Beckett supported the IRP's recommendations. However, he expressed concern at the number of instances when the timetabled dates of meetings were re-arranged due to the absence of the Chairman and commented on the need to allow the Vice-Chairman to Chair meetings in the absence of the Chairman, or there was no purpose in them receiving an SRA. Councillor Beckett commented that in the case of Planning Committee which met monthly, the Vice-Chairman did Chair meetings.

Councillor Bill Hunt referred to the fact that Councillors could elect to forgo all or part of their allowances and enquired, in the light of her earlier comments, if Councillor Dupré would not be taking the increase until 2019.

Councillor Dupré thanked the Panel for their work and commented that they had asked well thought-out questions as part of the review and that the report was well-argued with clear justifications for their recommendations. She highlighted the references to the previous cut in allowances and low level of the current allowances when compared nationally. However, Councillor Dupré still questioned if the additional costs could be justified in the current climate. Whilst in the case of her District Ward it would cover 4 villages in 2019 rather than 1 as at present, the larger areas and workloads would not come into effect until 2019, so there was not really the justification for an increase until then. The reduction in the number of Councillors proposed as part of the boundary review had been partly motivated by a drive towards savings, so this increase was not within the spirit of that motivation. Whilst she acknowledged the principle that Councillors should accept the findings and recommendations of the Independent Panel, she believed that it might be a little premature to take the

increases now before we were aware of the impact of the boundary changes on the role and workloads of Councillors. However, Councillor Dupré did support the revised recommendation on the Member Surgery Venue Hire Allowance, which she regarded as a more simplified approach.

Councillor Tom Hunt acknowledged that whilst the Councillors here in this Chamber had not been deterred from standing for office, there remained a deficiency regionally and nationally of younger and working Councillors, as these people still struggled to take up such a role. In the current economic climate, it was more important that Councillors better identified with and represented the needs of people in the local community struggling with issues such as the Housing crisis, etc. Councillor Tom Hunt thanked the Panel for a well put together report and stated that, whilst there was never a good time to take an increase, ECDC Councillors should not be paid significantly less than Members of other Councils for undertaking the same role.

Councillor Bailey highlighted the fact that it was a statutory requirement for an independent Panel to review the level of allowances of a Principal Council and make recommendations a minimum of every 4 years. She thanked the Panel for its thorough review and report and the thoughtful manner in which they had interviewed Councillors, including herself. Councillor Bailey also thanked the officers who had supported the Panel in its work. In 2010/11 the Council had been facing serious Budget challenges requiring a responsible approach to address these and produce a balanced Budget for future years. This had required Councillors to take the lead and approve a cut in allowances. However deflation could not be sustained indefinitely, if the Council was to attract quality candidates to stand for election. Councillor Bailey could not understand the position of the Liberal Democrat Leader of respecting the findings in the report but not wanting to implement them. The Council had done a lot of work since 2011 to maintain a sound financial position and balanced Budget whilst delivering on our promises and not cutting services, so this appeared to be the time to take independent advice and recommendations.

Upon being put to the vote, the revised motion was declared to be carried by a majority.

It was resolved:

1. That Council agree the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.
2. That Council agree to maximise the level of allowances payable to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council to accord with any increase agreed in the level of Special Responsibility Allowances.

3. That Council agree to amend the venue hire costs allowance for Members' surgeries (ref. Constitution 6(3)) to allocate up to a maximum of £100 per Member towards the costs of hiring venues for Member surgeries per annum.
4. That Council notes that there will be a reduction in the Budget for Members' allowances from May 2019 due to the reduction in the number of Councillors from 39 to 28 as a result of the Electoral Review.

(ii) Treasury Operations Annual Performance Review

It was resolved:

That the report on the Council's Treasury operations during 2016/17 including the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators, as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

27. **APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER**

*The Finance Manager, Ian Smith, left the meeting for the duration of this item.*

Council considered a report, S54 previously circulated, regarding the appointment of the Council's new Section 151 Officer. Councillor Beckett stated that he was pleased to propose the designation of the Finance Manager, Ian Smith, to undertake this role, as he had been concerned at the previous arrangement whereby the S151 Officer was not an employee of this Council. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor David Ambrose-Smith. Councillor Bill Hunt asked if Mr Smith could be formally introduced to Councillors on his return to the Council Chamber.

It was resolved:

That Mr Ian Smith be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer under the Local Government Act 1972 and 1988.

On his return to the Council Chamber, Mr Smith was greeted with a round of applause by Members and the Chairman Introduced him to the Council.

28. **AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION - CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

Council considered a report, S55 previously circulated, containing draft revised Contract Procedure Rules for inclusion in the Council's Constitution. Councillor Sharp stated that some queries had been raised regarding the detail of the draft Contract Procedure Rules. Therefore, it was proposed that they be referred to Resources and

Finance Committee for further consideration/clarification. This approach was seconded by Councillor Dupré who advised that she had raised the fact that the draft Contract Procedure Rules appeared to conflict with the Local Government Transparency Code on tendering and reporting thresholds and this needed further clarification.

It was resolved:

That the revised Contract Procedure Rules attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report be referred to Resources and Finance Committee for further consideration/clarification.

## 29. **COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORT**

Council received a report, previously circulated, on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's appointees.

Councillor Roberts, as the Council's representative on the Combined Authority Board, stated that the Combined Authority now was gathering real pace but was a very young organisation which needed to develop its processes. However, the Mayor already had set out his priorities and 100 day plan. Councillor Roberts emphasised the scale of the benefits in terms of funding and new projects that would flow from the Combined Authority and agreed to provide a detailed report to Members in the future on the Mayor's priorities and the anticipated benefits for East Cambridgeshire from the Combined Authority.

Councillor Dupré acknowledged that it was early days for the new Combined Authority but expressed concern at the spiralling costs in terms of staffing for the Mayor, Chief Executive and a proposed staff of up to 20 and the commissioning of feasibility studies. She highlighted the requirement, referred to in the report of the Board meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June, for the Mayor and Combined Authority to assume certain transport functions as the Local Transport Authority and to produce a Local Transport Plan. An interim Local Transport Plan had been adopted which amalgamated the previous Plans of Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. Therefore, Councillor Dupré questioned the current status of the East Cambridgeshire Transport Plan produced by Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor Dupré also asked if the Leader of the Council agreed with the National Audit Office comment that Combined Authority arrangements were too complex to drive real change.

Councillor Roberts commended the proposal of the Combined Authority to cap its staffing structure to around 20. He stated that the Authority was giving a great deal of thought to controlling costs. Whilst the interim Local Transport Plan amalgamated the previous Plans of Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, it did not take account of the future development and growth that would result

from the establishment of the Combined Authority. Therefore, a new Transport Plan would be developed over the next year.

It was resolved:

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

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm.

Chairman.....

Date            5 October 2017