



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

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

Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Christine Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor David Ambrose-Smith	Councillor Chris Morris
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor James Palmer
Councillor Derrick Beckett	Councillor Andy Pearson
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor Mike Bradley	Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor David Chaplin	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Steve Cheetham	Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor Paul Cox	Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Coralie Green	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Richard Hobbs	
Councillor Julia Huffer	

### 52. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, nominations were requested for a Chairman for the meeting. Councillor Hobbs was proposed and seconded to act as Chairman for the duration of the meeting and there being no other nominations,

It was resolved:

That Councillor Hobbs be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

### 53. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were submitted.

### 54. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allan, Austen, Brown, Cresswell, Griffin-Singh, Tom Hunt and Daniel Schumann.

55. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Palmer declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item 14 on the appointment of Returning Officer for the Combined Authority Mayoral Elections.

56. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

57. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Chairman's Civic Reception

The Chairman of the Council has asked that I read out the following on his behalf:

I would like to put on record a few comments about my last Civic Reception.

First of all, Mary and I would like to thank the councillors and members of staff who attended and networked so well during the evening. It was a pleasure to have guests coming from all over the District, from Peterborough, South Cambs, Huntingdon, St Ives and even the Reeve of Bungay and all the High Ranking Officers of the Police and Military, etc. A gathering of dignitaries that I think will be very useful now that we are starting the Devolution programme.

I will name one person at this stage – and that is Cllr Mike Rouse who took all the photographs and passed some on to the Media. Thank you for your hard work and I am very grateful to you.

Since the event, I have received several cards and letters and I would like to mention one or two:

The Mayor and Mayoress of Godmanchester enjoyed the band from Bottisham Village College and particularly “the care they received from the ladies at the door that was just wonderful.” This, of course refers to the dedication of Lynne Smart and her team. Thank you Lynne.

Finally, from Sir Hugh Duberly, the Lord Lieutenant, who wrote “You have been chairman at a very interesting and challenging time. The new projects that are starting under your watch will greatly enhance the facilities in the District. What a very happy occasion it was and we enjoyed your surprise by marking the Chinese New Year”.

Shin yen kwai lo.

#### Polling District and Polling Places Review

The Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer has been required to correct two minor clerical errors in the text of the Polling District review agreed by Council in January. Arrangements for the publication of the notice are being made and will not affect the timetable. The amended text has been tabled for members' information – the maps are unaffected.

58. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

59. **MOTIONS**

No motions were received.

60. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

The following question was asked by Councillor Julia Huffer in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2:

Residents have been concerned about the potential loss of the Minor Injuries Unit at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely. There have been various meetings on the issue with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and I would be very grateful for an update.

The question was responded to by the Chairman of Regulatory and Support Services Committee, Councillor Anna Bailey, who welcomed the opportunity to give an update on the current position due to importance of the facility to local people. She stated that there was now a more positive direction of travel, as a result of the strength of feeling of local residents. 10,000 patients were treated at the unit over a 52 week period rather than being sent elsewhere. A pilot scheme was due to commence in the spring supported by local GPs as part of a phased move to turn the facility into an Urgent Care Unit, with extended hours and diagnostic services. Councillor Bailey thanked the CCG for their extensive consultation and for listening to the public. They should be commended for this and not taking the 'easy option'. A Planning application was to be submitted for re-development of part of the site of the old RAF buildings, but the floor space of the hospital would remain the same as currently. It was proposed that this re-development would include a purpose-built Urgent Care Unit. As this would be an evolving, phased process with regard to the hours and diagnostic services offered, monitoring and evaluation would be required. Councillor Bailey had requested that the Council be advised of the evaluation criteria and all parties would be

looking for evidence of diversion of patients away from local A&E facilities to the Unit.

61. **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 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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

**Regulatory & Support Services Committee – 6 February 2017**

**Waste Service Options Review**

The Committee considered an Exempt report detailing recommendations from Regulatory & Support Services Committee regarding future Waste Collection and Street Cleansing provision beyond the current contract term. The recommendations from Regulatory & Support Services Committee involving delivery through East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC) were proposed and seconded by Councillors Bailey and Huffer.

Councillor Bailey, as the Chairman of Regulatory and Support Services Committee, stated that there had been some nervousness about this subject as the biggest single contract of the Council. However, lots of scrutiny of the options had taken place and she thanked officers and the Waste Services Review Working Party for the robust process followed. The proposals put forward gave flexibility for the future and meant that Service configuration could be changed in the light of circumstances. Quality also could be more directly controlled, it fitted with the Council's commercialisation agenda, the Council would control costs and the profit element to an external company would be removed. This option aimed to be cost neutral over a five year period, whilst Market testing indicated that there were likely to be rises in contract prices. Risk mitigation and monitoring would be important aspects of the new arrangements, but Councillor Bailey urged Members to adopt this option as the best way forward.

Councillor Dupré stated that she had a number of qualms relating to potential conflicts between the interests of the company and those of the Council. More services needed to be brought into the company to re-balance it due to the Property function. Councillor Dupré acknowledged that flexibility was important and, in particular, she wanted the Council to be nimble about a future move to cleaner hybrid vehicles for the Service as a positive environmental contribution to the District. She also wanted the Council to

offer residents a second 'Blue' bin to encourage them to recycle more. Councillor Dupré expressed concern that a document as important and detailed as the Risk Management Plan had not been submitted at an earlier stage to the Regulatory and Support Services Committee and only had been received late by full Council, as it need thorough examination and consideration. However, she commented that it was much better than previous Risk documents for similar projects, although it did contain some minor errors which she highlighted to officers. Councillor Dupré stated that if her concerns and two requests were given due consideration, she would be supportive of the recommendations.

Councillor Cheetham, as a Member of the Waste Services Review Working Party, expressed his support for the recommendations and requested that there be regular reports to full Council to monitor the Service and mitigate risks. Councillor Huffer, as Chairman of the Working Party, stated that she would welcome regular reports to full Council.

Councillor Hunt commented that the interests of the Company and the Council were the same, as the Council appointed the Directors to the Board, was the sole shareholder and scrutinised the work of the Company. This was Council Taxpayers money that was being spent and the Council would ensure that it was properly accounted for.

It was resolved:

1. That the existing waste collection service format of weekly black sack refuse, fortnightly wheeled bin recycling and organics be retained.
2. That future service delivery is through East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC).
3. That services are transferred to ECTC from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
4. That additional resources be put in place as required to enable transition of services in the required timescale.
5. That a vehicle fleet analysis be carried out at the earliest opportunity to establish the condition and expected lifespan of vehicles currently used for delivery of services.

63. **RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

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

**Corporate Governance and Finance Committee – 30 January 2017**

**2017/18 Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)**

Council considered a report, R207, previously circulated, containing a recommendation from Corporate Governance and Finance Committee on the proposed 2017/18 Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS).

Councillor Bailey commended officers for the fact that the Council had no external borrowing at present, robust finances and could fund the new Leisure Centre and Trading Company internally, due to being 'ahead of the curve'.

Councillor David Ambrose-Smith endorsed Councillor Bailey's comments and commended the Council's investment strategy.

It was resolved:

That approval be given to:

- The 2017/18 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.

65. **BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST REGISTER**

Council considered a report, R208, previously circulated, containing the finalised Buildings of Local Interest Register as agreed by Regulatory and Support Services Committee on 23 January 2017.

Councillor Hunt congratulated the Conservation Officer on her work on the Register, which recognised that there were other buildings, structures and monuments that made a valuable contribution to the local scene but which did not merit inclusion on the national list. It was important to recognise these locally to prevent loss or deterioration and show that they were also treasured. Councillor Hunt hoped that the Register would generate enthusiasm in parishes to put forward buildings and structures for inclusion and to value and preserve things from a bygone age. Thereby the Register would be a living and growing document.

Councillor Rouse also commended this interesting and valuable document and suggested that the Ely Turnpike posts and Ely Market should be added to the Register, as they were an important part of the history of the

City. He endorsed Councillor Hunt's view that Parishes should be constantly looking to identify other suitable buildings, structures and monuments for inclusion on the Register to keep it 'live' and accurate. He was pleased that even stink pipes and village pumps were being recognised as heritage assets.

Councillor Dupré congratulated the Conservation Officer on this excellent document which showed the fascinating and varied heritage of the District. She was pleased to see that more recent pieces of architecture also were included on the Register as heritage assets. Councillor Dupré commented that the register could be an important resource for Parishes embarking on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and also could be used to identify interesting buildings, structures and even local landscape heritage for leisure purposes. She raised a question as to how the Register would be updated and kept 'live'. The Conservation Officer stated that once approved, the register would be allowed to 'settle' for a while and then an informal approach could be taken to suggested additions before a further formal nominations process was undertaken in a few years time.

Councillor Bailey commented that there had been lengthy debate at Regulatory & Support Services Committee regarding the buildings and structures to be included or removed from the draft Register to produce the final version here this evening. In addition, some owners had objected to inclusion of their buildings on the Register. Therefore, it was requested that owners be reassured that inclusion on the Register would not affect existing Planning controls that already apply to the property or structure. Councillor Bailey supported the proposal that local landscape assets such as walks, trails and historic trees be included on the Register.

In concluding the debate, the Chairman requested that the congratulations of all Members of the Council to the Conservation Officer for the production of the Register be recorded.

It was resolved:

That the finalised Buildings of Local Interest Register as agreed by Regulatory and Support Services Committee attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be adopted.

66. **REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX 2017/18**

Council considered a report, R209, previously circulated, detailing the Council's proposed Revenue and Capital Budgets and the required level of Council Tax for 2017/18. The report also assessed the robustness of the budgets, the adequacy of reserves and updated the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Attention was drawn to Appendix 1 containing the formal Council Tax Resolution reflecting the County Council precept decision taken after the Council Agenda despatch, which had been circulated and copies made available at the meeting.

The Director Resources & Chief Financial Officer summarised the report as follows:

#### **Grant Settlement (paragraph 4)**

Provisional settlement numbers now confirmed.

4 Year settlement honoured.

But, New Homes Bonus reduced significantly - with £1.1 million less than we had previously assumed.

Government has confirmed current business rate scheme remains - although we benefit from 100% of new growth as a pilot.

#### **2017/18 Budget (paragraph 5)**

Prudent assumptions made.

Since CG&F Committee - reflected the impact of the waste service transferring to the Trading Company in April 2018.

Collection Fund on business rates shows a healthy surplus.

The report picks up on changes to Small Business Rate Relief - from £6,000 to £12,000, fully funded by DCLG.

#### **Reserves (paragraph 7)**

Regular review to ensure adequacy and prudent.

Council created a MTFS Reserve, to protect us from any sudden news such as the New Homes Bonus announcement.

The pilot for business rates has already generated significant additional income, with in excess of £1 million being generated above what we would have normally retained.

Suggested that the MTFS Reserve and pilot income received in 2015/16 be used to offset the loss of New Homes Bonus, bringing our MTFS back in line.

#### **Fees and Charges (paragraph 8)**

General inflationary increases.

Specific changes set out in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4.



### **Capital Programme (paragraph 9)**

Increased cost of the Leisure Centre, offset through savings on the project costs and additional CIL monies received and forecast to the end of March 2017.

Fully funded revised costs of the leisure centre, the trading company, new refuse vehicles (to replace the original Veolia vehicles bought in 2008), Ely Country Park without the need for any external borrowing. This will need to be kept under review.

### **Council Tax (paragraph 10)**

Propose to freeze Council Tax for a Band D property at £142.14.

### **Risk (paragraph 11)**

I have two statutory obligations which I am required to advise on before Council considers the budget.

First, are the budget estimates and assumptions robust? They have been constructed with service leads and Management Team, so are accepted by them as reasonable. The key risks are in future years, around business rates (2020 for change, or earlier?) and the Fair Funding Review.

As I have stated previously in this Chamber, and elsewhere, the reliance on income from DCLG will cease. To be replaced with authorities generating their own income- whether it be through trading or taxation. Managing income will become of greater importance.

Second, adequacy of reserves. These are both adequate and prudent.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy (paragraph 12)**

I have already touched on changes to business rates and reserves.

Assumptions (at paragraph 12.4) are prudent; low growth in business rates, no assumed savings in cost base - or any income achieved through trading either.

From these prudent assumptions, the MTFS shows balanced budgets for 2017/18 and 2018/19 - and a small deficit in 2019/20. I have already highlighted the risks facing us beyond that date.

To meet these challenges, I propose how we continue to move the Council.

At paragraph 12.6, I propose a continuation of the approach; which is:

- To increase income, particularly from commercialisation;
- If this approach does not deliver balanced budgets - increase Council Tax;
- If this too does not balance the budget - service reductions.

The recommendations in the submitted report were proposed by Councillor Palmer and seconded by Councillor Roberts.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Palmer, stated that he was happy to propose the recommendations as, out of 157 local authorities, we were one of only 4 not proposing an increase in Council Tax. He congratulated officers and Members for all their hard work to ensure that an increase in Council Tax was the 'last resort'. They all were working to provide the best possible services in the best interests of local people. This was the fourth year in which there had been no increase in the Council Tax, and the reason for this was that East Cambridgeshire always looked ahead to control and to change our own future ourselves. The Trading Company was an intrinsic part of this and why we could respond to the loss of New Homes Bonus, as it provided protection for the Council in such situations. Councillor Palmer again thanked staff and Members and commended this Budget and Council Tax freeze to the Council.

Councillor Bailey, as the Chairman of Regulatory and Support Services Committee, stated that this Committee had delivered a significant underspending over the year, substantially due to an increase in Planning income. This had enabled the funding of the IT transformation programme. Building Control also should be commended for delivering an efficient service and competing effectively for external work. By keeping ahead of the curve and helping people before they got to crisis point, the Housing Team was spending £0 on temporary accommodation compared to previous spending of around £750K per year. The Business Rates Retention Pilot had been successful due to the work of the Economic Development Team operating on a small resource – it was hoped that further investment could be provided for this Team in the future. This Council did not need to increase Council Tax due to robust forward planning and Councillor Bailey thanked officers for their hard work and 'can do' attitude which enabled this to happen.

Councillor Bill Hunt referred to the recent reports in the national media regarding increases in Business Rates arising from the revaluation, but this Council was providing Small Business Rate Relief as detailed in paragraph 6.5 of the report. He also highlighted the fact that the Council still did not charge for parking in its car parks. However, he commented that it was appropriate for a review to be undertaken of the Business Parking Permit Scheme. Councillor Hunt also queried why there had been a reduction of £10 per hour in the hourly rate for Legal work on S106 Agreements for the Legal Services Manager.

Councillor Rouse expressed his support for the Budget and thanked the Leader of the Council for the strong direction and vision he had provided and

for managing the Council in the most effective manner to give the Council Tax payers of the District the best possible value for money. Council expressed their affirmation for Councillor Rouse's comments.

On a point of clarification, Councillor Dupré stated that the 157 figure quoted by Councillor Palmer related to upper tier Councils, whilst there were over 200 District Councils. Councillor Dupré stated that many of her concerns/comments related to the Trading Company and new Leisure Centre. We were constructing a new Leisure Centre whilst many Councils were currently trying to divest themselves of Leisure facilities due to their high maintenance costs. This appeared to be a gamble and the Council would have to see how things developed. A number of the projects/proposals of the Council seemed to be drawing business away from the centre of Ely, such as the new Leisure complex, moving of coach parking out of the city, closure of public conveniences and reduction of local bus services. These did not seem to be being considered in a financial context. Large sums of money relating to Disabled Facilities Grant were being rolled over, meaning that people were waiting longer for these vital improvements. This Council may be in a happier and healthier financial position overall, but we needed to be cautious that we were not storing up problems for the future.

Councillor Bradley stated that he was proud to be a Member of this Council as it had frozen Council Tax, not introduced parking charges and still had good facilities and services, due to the hard work of its staff.

Councillor Roberts echoed these positive views and stated that he was pleased to second the recommendations.

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: (29) – Cllrs Alderson, C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Beckett, Bovingdon, Bradley, Chaplin, Cheetham, Cox, Edwards, Every, Green, Hobbs, Huffer, Hugo, B Hunt, Morris, Palmer, Pearson, Roberts, Ross, Rouse, J Schumann, Sennitt, Sharp, Smith, Stubbs and Webber.

AGAINST: (1). – Cllr Dupré.

ABSTENTIONS: (0)

The Motion was declared to be carried.

It was resolved:

1. That approval be given to:
  - The formal Council Tax Resolution which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.
  - The draft 2017/18 revenue budget as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, including a proposed Council Tax freeze.
  - The Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.
  - The 2017/18 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.
2. To note that we are still awaiting Final Settlement grant figures from Government, and therefore authorise the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council to adjust the use of the surplus savings reserve (as necessary) so that the net budget and Council Tax remains as approved by Council, if the numbers change after full Council.

67. **ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP (ARP) – SECTION 113 AGREEMENT**

Council considered a report, R210 previously circulated, giving details of a proposed shared management team and a Section 113 agreement with Norwich City Council by ARP.

Councillor David Ambrose-Smith, as the Council's representative of the ARP Joint Committee, explained that other Councils wished to join the Partnership but it had been limited to 7 partner Councils, although others could access their skills and services. Any future approaches of this nature would be approved by the ARP Joint Committee unless this Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Member representative on ARP determines it should come before full Council. The Minutes of ARP Joint Committee were submitted to this Council's Corporate Governance and Finance Committee.

It was resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers be instructed to negotiate and enter into a Section 113 agreement with Norwich City Council so that the services of Anglia Revenues Partnership staff can be shared.
3. That approval be given for the ARP management team to start working with Norwich City Council immediately to carry out any

necessary work prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 that will assist with the commencement of the agreement.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that this would be the last Council meeting attended by The Director Resources & Chief Financial Officer, Mr Andy Radford, who was leaving the authority. Councillor Palmer stated that he was saying goodbye to Andy with a heavy heart and thanked him for all of his excellent work and helpful advice, particularly on projects such as the new Leisure Centre, and expressed the best wishes of the Council to him for the future. The Chairman echoed these views and suggested that Andy should come and take a first dip in the new Leisure Centre pool. Members expressed their appreciation to Mr Radford by a round of applause.

68. **COMBINED AUTHORITY (MAYORAL ELECTIONS) ORDER 2017 – APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER**

*Councillor Palmer and the Chief Executive left the meeting for the duration of this item.*

Council considered a report, R211 previously circulated, requesting the appointment of the Chief Executive as the Returning Officer for the election of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor.

In response to a question by Councillor Beckett, it was confirmed that the costs relating to the Election would be recovered from the Combined Authority.

It was resolved:

1. To appoint John Hill, Chief Executive, as the Returning Officer (East Cambridgeshire) for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayoral Elections to be held in May 2017.
2. To authorise the Returning Officer to appoint, if required, Deputy and/or Deputies, in his absence, to undertake those responsibilities on his behalf.

*Councillor Palmer and the Chief Executive returned to the meeting.*

69. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18 AND APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER**

Council considered a report, R212 previously circulated, detailing the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and proposals to appoint the Council's new Section 151 Officer.

The HR Manager stated that the ratio between the highest grade and lowest grade at the scale minimum pay point was 1:8. The HR Manager also

explained new legislative requirements regarding individuals working for Councils through an intermediary and relating to termination payments. As a result of the impending departure from the Council of the current Section 151 Officer, Mr Andy Radford, the report also contained proposals for interim arrangements involving the Council entering into a Section 113 Agreement with Peterborough City Council for their Corporate Director Resource, Mr John Harrison, to carry out the duties.

The Chairman of Regulatory and Support Services Committee, Councillor Bailey, commented that the current Management Structure of the Council was very lean and this would be monitored.

Councillor Dupré referred to the fact that this was the second occasion on which the Council had appointed someone not directly employed by the Council to carry out the role of S151 Officer. She expressed concern that this approach was being taken again for such an important role in such a lean organisation.

It was resolved:

1. That the 2017/18 Pay Policy Statement be approved and adopted.
2. That Mr John Harrison be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer under the Local Government Act 1972 and 1988.

The meeting concluded at 7.22pm.

Chairman.....

Date