



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
26 February 2015 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Lindsey Harris
Councillor Michael Allan (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor Ian Allen	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith	Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor David Ambrose Smith	Councillor Chris Morris
Councillor Sue Austen	Councillor Neil Morrison
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor James Palmer
Councillor Derrick Beckett	Councillor Tony Parramint
Councillor David Brown	Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor Tony Cornell (Chairman)	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Robert Stevens
Councillor Kevin Ellis	Councillor Hazel Williams MBE
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Gareth Wilson
Councillor Colin Fordham	Councillor Pauline Wilson
Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith	Councillor Andy Wright
Sheila Friend-Smith MBE	
Councillor Tony Goodge	

1 member of the public was in attendance at the meeting

71. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

72. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh, Councillor Tom Kerby, Councillor Philip Read Councillor Hamish Ross and Councillor Sue Willows.

73. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Principal Solicitor and Monitoring Officer explained the position on declarations of interests and dispensations relating to the Budget and Council Tax.

No declarations of interests were received.

74. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

75. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Chairman's Reception: 20 February 2015

The Chairman thanked all Members that had attended the Chairman's Reception held on 20 February 2015 at the Hayward Theatre at The King's School, Ely. The Chairman stated that he had received many positive comments on the Reception, which gave a good opportunity to meet and exchange views with representatives of other authorities.

'Hidden Gem' Award – Oliver Cromwell's House

The Chairman congratulated Oliver Cromwell's House on receipt of a 'Hidden Gem' award. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chairman of Commercial Services Committee, Councillor Richard Hobbs, explained about the award and the income generated from Tourism within the District. Councillor Hobbs commended the work of Tracey Harding and the Town Centre Services and Tourism Team and this was acknowledged by the Council with a round of applause.

76. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

77. **MOTIONS**

(a) Constitutional Amendments Planning Committee

The proposer of the Motion, Councillor Mike Rouse, stated that he wished to amend the wording as stated on the Agenda sheet, to withdraw subparagraph (i) stated on the Agenda sheet as this was covered under subparagraphs (ii) and (iii).

The following Motion (as amended) therefore was proposed by Cllr Mike Rouse and seconded by Cllr Charles Roberts:

The Council instructs the Chief Executive and Principal Solicitor to amend and addend the Constitution forthwith, specifically (Section 3

Responsibility of Functions, Planning Committee Page 44/45/46 5.0, Delegation to Officers) to include the following:

- (i) amend 5.3 "The delegation of Sections 70 and 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 applications is subject to a Member's right to request that a **non-householder** development planning decision, is made by the Planning Committee PROVIDING this request is within the period up to the issuing of the decision notice;
- (ii) amend 5.5 "A Member may make a request that a **householder** development planning decision is made by the Planning Committee PROVIDING this request is within the period up to the issuing of the decision notice.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Rouse stated that the Motion gave greater involvement in the Planning process to Members and extended the time limit to 'Call-in' applications, which had been an issue for Councillors on occasions. He commented that in the past all applications had come to Planning Committee and there may be a belief now that too many decisions were taken under delegated powers by Officers. The public perception was that Members should be involved in Planning decisions and, whilst this was not always practical, the Motion made provision for greater powers for Councillors and would strike a better balance. Therefore, Councillor Rouse urged Members to support the Motion.

Councillor Dupré expressed disappointment that the original subparagraph (i) on the Agenda sheet had been withdrawn, as she stated that she could have supported this. Councillor Dupré did not believe that the amended Motion was the correct way to tackle the issue, as it allowed unlimited time for Member Call-in, which was not good governance. This would leave staff in a difficult position and would not be fair on the public and applicants, particularly in relation to small applications from individual householders. They would not be aware for a prolonged period of time of who would be taking the decision on an application. For the areas where the procedure appeared not to be working, e.g. when plans were amended, a different solution was required, e.g. say 28 days from the amendment of an application. Sometimes the 28 day period commenced before consultation began and this also could be addressed in a different way, by saying that the 28 days commenced from when Members were consulted. Therefore, the Motion was not the way to resolve issues and Councillor Dupré stated that she would be voting against it.

Councillor Stevens stated that he had been on Planning Committee for 4 years and had taken an active interest in applications relating to his Ward. He did not believe that the 28 day Call-in period was a problem in itself, but the issue was that it started from the validation of the application. He suggested that it should be extended to 35 or 42 days.

The Chairman requested clarification of 'the period up to the issuing of the decision notice', and the Chairman of Planning Committee, Councillor Schumann, stated that this varied depending on the complexity of the application.

Councillor Gareth Wilson stated that the Motion was vague and unhelpful, as Members would not be aware of when a decision was about to be made and would need to find out from Officers. He suggested that the Motion be discussed at the next Planning Committee in order to come up with an appropriate solution to the issues. He also considered that the original sub-paragraph (i) on the Agenda sheet should be reinstated.

Councillor Schumann commented that the debate showed that there were compelling reasons why the procedure needed amending. Councillor Schumann stated that he did not believe that the amendments would create extra work for staff. The original sub-paragraph (i) on the Agenda sheet challenged Local Plan policies, which was why it needed to be withdrawn. There were also safeguards in the Constitution for the other issues raised in the debate. Councillor Schumann stated that it was not the intention of the Motion that Members Call-in applications at the final hour, but was about empowering Members to be able to consider an application at a Committee in cases where amendments had been made which Councillors were unhappy with. The effectiveness of the changes could be reviewed once implemented.

Councillor Beckett stated that he supported the Motion, as it was not until the consultation had started and the Parish Council was consulted that Members often heard about people's views on particular applications and then the 28 day period may have expired. He expressed the view that smaller householder applications could create more issues than bigger applications. Councillor Beckett commented that he had sat on the Planning Committee for 8 years and had seen an increasing number of decisions by Councillors at Committee that overturned Officer recommendations.

Councillor Tom Hunt expressed his support for the Motion, as it empowered local Councillors on the most important issue of Planning, whilst not giving them carte blanche. It was right that this should be an issue that was debated by full Council.

Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith gave an example whereby he had received the previous week's Planning list, noticed an application relating to his Ward and consulted the Case Officer. However, on another occasion, his wife had been unable to Call-in an application as the period had expired. The Motion appeared sensible and would allow for situations where for instance a Member might be on holiday for 2 weeks, etc.

Councillor Roberts, as the seconder of the Motion, stated that the current system was not really working at the moment and that this Motion would be a step in the right direction. However, it was the responsibility of

Members to read the weekly Planning lists promptly and the responsibility of Case Officers to keep Ward Members informed.

In summing up, Councillor Rouse thanked Members for the debate and thoughtful comments, which recognised the need for change in certain areas. He commented that some of these issues could be re-visited later in the year, in the light of experience.

It was resolved:

On being put to the vote, the motion, as amended, was supported.

(b) Review of Future Income and Expenditure

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Ian Allen and seconded by Cllr Neil Morrison:

That this Council carries out an urgent review of future income and expenditure, looking at least five years ahead, with particular reference to the need to maintain good quality services.

The review must include the costs of meeting EU waste diversion targets and the maintenance of good sports facilities across the district.

In the light of the findings, Council will transparently appraise the true long term costs of the proposed leisure centre and act with prudence on those findings.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Allen addressed Council as follows:

'I am proposing this Motion for adoption by the Council, as I am concerned that not all Members are aware of the long term impacts of the proposed leisure centre investment.

I have no problem with the investment in leisure infrastructure and believe it is a core role of the authority to provide for the wellbeing of the entire district. However, I would like to pose some questions.

Consider the breadth of services that the Council has to provide and others that it would like to provide.

The leisure centre falls within the like category, waste reduction, environmental health, planning and housing of sufficient number and quality fall within the category of 'must'.

What is the strategy post the current two bin waste collection contract, subsidised on a one-off basis by Central Government, what are the

costs of the likely upgrades to meet anticipated higher recycling targets, where is the near million pounds expected to be needed to start a new contract going to come from?

What generally is the strategy for spreading an increasingly small amount of available cash across the district in an equitable way? How are we to support sports and leisure facilities in such locations as Bottisham, Burwell, Soham and Littleport? Are we expecting everyone to drive to the proposed new leisure centre in Ely, or are public transport links of sufficient quality going to be in place to allow access for all, no matter where they live, and has this been costed into the proposal?

To the point then, what is the impact on the wide range of services that the district must provide?

Are the loan repayments of £451K every year for 30 plus years affordable in the context of reducing income and likely revenue from the centre nowhere near meeting them. As a Council that sees itself as adopting a commercial mentality, is it time to take a leaf out of Tesco's book, reassess the financial realities post the financial crash and humbly adopt a more modest leisure policy.

It may be that there are plans to which most Members are not privy, to merge with another authority to save money, to use more CIL money or use all reserves to support the loan proposal. Radical plans to support a single project do not serve the district well, a cross section of residents might well see other services as more fundamental to the core purposes of the authority.

I urge you to accept this Motion, it is not a wrecking Motion, but asks for reasoned actions based on evidence. We have two years, but I suspect that beyond that the picture is not so rosy. I hope that this debate helps dispel my image of lemmings and a cliff.

Part of the costs of the leisure centre are presumably a refurbishment costed in at 15 to 20 years to allow the centre to last the full term of the loan period, a budget that is sadly lacking for existing leisure centre trusts. How much has been set aside for this known cost and where is the money coming from? New Homes Bonus and CIL payments are not cast iron income streams, and any attempt to bolster income from development will impact on the supply of affordable housing, surely not something that we would want to be responsible for.

Members please vote for this Motion that asks for evidence, transparency and prudence, how could it not get your support, I cannot imagine that Members would want to over-commit the

authority without evidence of long term affordability and the impact of that commitment.

Councillor Palmer has stated that full Council is the arena for scrutiny, please scrutinise our position openly, put politics aside and sound financial planning to the foreground in this debate.'

Councillor Hobbs stated that, as Chair of Commercial Services Committee, he considered it a privilege to spearhead the leisure centre project. The Council currently had an ageing pool that cost £170K per year to run and did not break even. As Chair, he had been open throughout the process and the Council had received a great deal of support from Sport England, who had now stated that they were prepared to increase their grant to the Council for the project. National evidence showed that sports centres could 'pay their way' if the mix of facilities was right and therefore income could cover borrowing. However, sports facilities could not be run on a bar alone and needed a strong business case. It was not true that the Council wanted to close other facilities in the District. There was still a lot of work to do on the project before it was brought back to Council for a final decision. Then Council would take the decision based upon full knowledge and evidence and hopefully be in a position to build a facility that it would be proud of.

Councillor Alderson stated that paragraph 3 of the Motion referred to the perceived risks relating to the leisure centre. In that context, he referred to the comparable project at Angel Drove Car Park, where there had been an overcrowded station car park and issues of commuters blocking-up other long stay car parks in the city. As a result, Tesco S106 funding had been used to build the car park at Angel Drove predominantly aimed at commuters to ease parking issues in that part of Ely. The Lib Dems had opposed the project stating that it would be only half full and run at a loss. However, it was so well used that consideration was being given to increasing capacity. Therefore, the project had gone from a perceived risk to a benefit for the residents of the District.

Councillor Rouse stated that the Motion pretended to be reasonable but showed a fear of doing something. It expressed reasonable concerns rather than actual opposition. However, the Council could not predict 5 years ahead and probably could not predict beyond the elections in May this year. EU waste diversion directives could be scrapped. The Council could not continually betray the communities it represented by being afraid to do things. The Motion was about delay rather than setting a positive course. This was why Councillor Rouse was against the Motion.

Councillor Wright stated that the Motion was asking for financial prudence, so he could not see that there was an issue with the Motion.

Councillor Bill Hunt stated that, whilst it might be tempting to be an opposition Lib Dem Member and not have to take decisions and have the

benefit of hindsight, it also meant that you did not have the ability to change things or undertake the difficult tasks of balancing assets and funding. It was easier to vote against or abstain than to vote for projects. However, the Council had an obligation to deliver projects such as a cinema and leisure centre, to promote East Cambridgeshire as a place to do business, deliver housing for residents, etc. Therefore, Councillor Hunt preferred to be in the political party that got things done.

Councillor Palmer referred to Councillor Allen's comment that New Homes Bonus could not be relied upon as an income stream for the future. This appeared to contradict previous statements that he had made. Councillor Palmer commented that residents paid a lot for their homes within the growing District and therefore expected the Council to deliver services and facilities.

Councillor Beckett commented that there had been a lot of 'smoke and mirrors' in the debate so far, with much being said that did not relate to the Motion, which was simply asking for prudence and accountability. The Motion reflected what any good local business would do. The Council needed to be able to complete what it started and take hard decisions to deliver services and facilities. This meant making sure that you could realistically cover the costs.

Councillor Williams stated that she had participated in some good debates in the Council over the years. Councillor Bill Hunt's speech had sounded like an election address and it was the role of the Lib Dems to provide opposition. However, to correct the facts, it had been Councillor Ian Allen who had proposed the Motion for the construction of the Angel Drove Car Park. Councillor Williams also commented that decisions on schemes often had been 'sown up' well before they got to full Council.

Councillor Gareth Wilson stated that he had not opposed the construction of the Angel Drove Car Park, but had wanted to ensure that it operated as efficiently as possible. He was unsure whether the leisure centre would be financially viable, but this was a small authority which would be committing a very large proportion of its income to this project to the detriment of other schemes which would also benefit the local community. The Council needed to look ahead and make reasonable estimates and one of the biggest concerns was the Waste contract renewal. The Motion was cautious and not extreme or party political, but showed a need to consider everything.

Councillor Roberts commented that the Council would not embark on any project without looking forward.

As seconder of the Motion, Councillor Morrison stated that the Financial Services Manager had made a prudent assessment of the serious issues facing the Council in two years time as part of the Budget, referring to the fact that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was being set by Central Government only one year at a time and the reduction in New Homes Bonus.

Eric Pickles also had been very vocal in his views regarding Councils with high levels of Reserves. There were also projected issues with the re-tendering of the Waste contract and £1M funding from this Council for the A14 upgrade. Therefore, it was uncertain if this Council also could afford £22M for a leisure centre for the next 35 years. If the Council continued with this obsession to build such a facility, it might be guilty of an error in judgement and he used the example of the transfer of the Council's Housing stock to a Housing Association that was no longer local or accountable. This reflected the law of unintended consequences which were not of benefit to local residents. Councillor Morrison commented that there was likely to be further austerity after the forthcoming General Election and, whilst pensioners may be shielded, middle income families were likely to be severely affected. Therefore, Councillors had to make a judgement on whether to spend money on good quality services for local residents or 'vanity projects'.

In summing-up, Councillor Allen stated that the debate demonstrated why he had submitted the Motion. The Motion was about the affordability of the leisure centre and the gap between income and loan repayments. Evidence from 15 providers showed that half of leisure centres did not pay for themselves. Many of the speakers had not engaged with the content of the Motion which stated the need for an affordable leisure centre rather than not having a leisure centre. Essentially the Motion was about choice and how the Council used increasingly limited resources. Councillor Allen assured Members that the Motion was not 'electioneering' as he was not intending to stand for re-election in May 2015. Therefore, he asked Members to support the Motion.

It was resolved:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7.20pm for a comfort break and reconvened at 7.27pm.

78. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

There were no questions from Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2.

However, with the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Fordham advised Members of the Council that the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to former Councillor John Palmer deceased would be taking place at the Soham Cemetery North Chapel this Sunday 1 March at 2.30pm. Councillor Fordham invited all Councillors to attend the ceremony.

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

Council considered a report, P193 previously circulated, detailing a recommendation from Corporate Governance and Finance Committee:

Corporate Governance and Finance Committee – 29 January 2015

2015/16 Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

It was resolved:

That approval be given to:

- The 2015/16 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, subject to the removal of Saudi Arabia from the list of approved countries for investments in Appendix 5.3 of the report.

80. **2015/2016 COUNCIL TAX, REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

Council considered a report, P194, previously circulated, detailing the Council's proposed capital and revenue budget and the setting of the Council Tax for 2015/16.

The Financial Services Manager introduced her report by reminding Members that the Council a balanced budget. The proposed 2015/16 net budget of £8.481M would be financed by Revenue Support Grant from Central Government, the retention of business rates and Council Tax freeze to take advantage of the Council Tax Freeze Grant. The Financial Services Manager also stated that she had a duty as Section 151 Officer to comment on the prudence of the Budget and adequacy of Reserves. She confirmed that the Budget had been produced on a prudential basis and that the Reserves were adequate.

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

The following amendment to the Council's Budget, as tabled at the meeting, then was proposed by Cllr Gareth Wilson and seconded by Cllr Dupré:

"Amend 2.2 to read:

That the draft Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 2 be approved subject to the inclusion of the following additional budgets:

- An annual budget for Road Safety Projects of £40,000
- A budget for the recruitment of a temporary Planning Enforcement Officer of £20,000
- To reinstate the 'Loo of the Year' awards subscription costing £1,500 per year
- The creation of an Environmental Enforcement Budget of £5,000

(Total increase of £66,500 in 2015/16 and £46,500 in 2016/17)

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Wilson stated that the additional budgets were easily affordable from the Surplus Savings Reserve. With regard to the individual items Councillor Wilson stated that:

- Road Safety Projects – previously there had been a joint minor highways projects fund with the County Council to which this Council contributed £60K, which Parish Councils could bid for funding of up to £25K for projects. The current County Council fund had reduced bids to £10K and required match funding from the Parish.
- Temporary Planning Enforcement Officer – a report to next week's Planning Committee details a backlog of over 100 cases. Lack of enforcement action will lead to discontent amongst the public and parish councils. A temporary post would help reduce the backlog.
- Loo of the Year award entry – this was recognition for one of the worst jobs we ask employees to do. The district benefits from a significant sum in income from tourism and tourists wanted nice, clean loos to visit and the district needed loos that it could be proud of.
- Environmental Enforcement Budget – budget for fly-tipping, etc.

Councillor Tom Hunt commented that this was the most important Council meeting of the year and a lot of detail was included in the Budget. However, the opposition had come up with four minor amendments. The balanced Budget contained projects which the administration believed residents wanted such as the bypass and leisure centre.

Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith referred to a quote of 'If you feed a whale what happens to the sardines?' Minor projects such as entry to the 'Loo of the Year' awards were meant to be a recognition for staff and when the Council withdrew from the competition a source of motivation was removed.

Councillor Bill Hunt stated that the Council had a Budget of £256,103 for maintenance of the 9 public conveniences within the District and a review also was being undertaken by the Commercial Services Committee, which showed its commitment in this area.

Councillor Pauline Wilson commented that other minor funding such as £15,000 for Community Transport schemes had been provided too late for Ely and Soham Dial-a-Ride. Similarly, the administration seemed to be blocking efforts to put other minor funding budgets in place.

Councillor Schumann stated that with regard to the Temporary Planning Enforcement Officer, consultation had not taken place with the relevant officers on whether and what was needed.

Councillor Ian Allen stated that whilst he could accept the amendment as a crumb towards better services, he understood the point of some administration Members that the opposition role was to propose a radically different Budget to that of the administration.

Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith disagreed with Councillor Allen's view, stating that if the opposition could not get modest and reasonable amendments that showed an investment in staff approved, what would be the point of making more radical proposals.

Councillor Williams referred to the good publicity that the Council had received in the past for the Loo of the Year award. The Council had spent money on providing promotional signs for the free city centre car parks, so it also seemed appropriate to spend a very modest amount on an award like this which gave staff pride in their work. Whilst the majority of items in the Budget were statutory requirements that the Council could not change, these four minor amendments could provide benefits to the community for a modest cost. On the issue of the temporary Planning Enforcement Officer, Councillor Williams hoped that parish councils would receive the level of Planning enforcement they expected if the comment that the post was not required was correct.

Councillor Palmer referred to the importance of strong opposition and therefore expressed his surprise at the proposed amendments to the Budget. He stated that he would have expected to see more significant proposals.

Councillor Hobbs expressed his support for the Loo of the Year award and stated that he had already given an undertaking at the Corporate Governance and Finance Committee that its reinstatement would be considered by Commercial Services Committee as part of the review.

Councillor Wright commented that out of a 67 page Budget only a handful of amendments had been highlighted and that these should have been raised at the Committee stage.

Councillor Goodge commented that clean public conveniences were an important issue for local people and visitors alike.

As the seconder of the amendment, Councillor Dupré commented that the four proposed amendments to the Budget were all issues that local people

felt strongly about. The road safety projects budget would unlock money for parishes and make a significant difference to local residents. The temporary Planning Enforcement Officer would help reduce the backlog of cases which it was reported otherwise would take 2.5 years to address. This was a long time for aggrieved residents to wait. The Loo of the Year award was a modest proposal compared to the £17K spent on promotional car parking signage and bearing in mind the significant income generated from tourism within the district. Environmental enforcement needed a small budget to deal with issues such as fly-tipping and littering that blighted our district.

In summing-up, Councillor Gareth Wilson stated that the amendment was a modest request relating to four areas needing attention. The Council had many statutory responsibilities that it could not do anything about. However, the Council did have a Committee system where it could consider and agree projects to improve matters. He also expressed his support for not increasing the Council Tax. Councillor Wilson reiterated that the Loo of the Year award reflected the Council's duty to both our employees and tourists. Road safety was critical and frequently raised by local people and parishes. There were still a large number of outstanding Planning enforcement cases from the departure of the previous postholder, so this issue should not be ignored. Environmental enforcement was a problem that needed flagging up due to lack of resources and funding was required to prevent littering and fly-tipping. Councillor Wilson therefore hoped that Members would support the amendment.

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: (12) – Cllrs Allen, Austen, Dupré, Fordham, J Friend-Smith, S Friend-Smith, Harris, Morrison, Stevens, Williams, Gareth Wilson, Pauline Wilson.

AGAINST: (22) – Cllrs Alderson, Allan, C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Beckett, Brown, Cornell, Edwards, Ellis, Every, Goodge, Hobbs, B Hunt, T Hunt, Morris, Palmer, Parramint, Roberts, Rouse, Schumann and Wright.

ABSTENTIONS: (0) None.

The amendment was declared to be lost.

In proposing the recommendations as detailed in the Officer's report, Cllr Palmer stated that the Council was fortunate to have a balanced Budget and commended the hard work of Officers to achieve this.

Councillor Fordham left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Councillor Beckett commented that Councillor Palmer appeared to be 'borrowing from Peter to pay Paul'.

Councillor Bailey commended the reduction in the expenditure on the running of car parks within the district. Councillor Bailey also requested clarification on a number of individual items in the draft Budget relating to net direct expenditure on Community Land Trusts, the central support service charges for closed churchyards and ADEC and queried if the Council still was using the right approach to apportion central support charges. The Financial Services Manager stated that the process for recharges was set out in a CIPFA publication and the Council was required to follow this by our external auditor. The Financial Services Manager then explained the process for recharges for particular service areas.

Councillor Goodge congratulated the Council on what it had achieved in relation to Angel Drove Car Park and queried the level of revenue lost by not charging for other car parks. Councillor Allen commented that the car park that he had moved the construction of was helping to balance the books in relation to the other car parks.

Councillor Wright stated that it was a great achievement that the Council had managed to fund its expenditure. But in two years time, the Council would have to fund deficits of £2M and £2.5M for future years which was a daunting task.

Councillor Morrison referred to a letter in a local newspaper by the Mayor of Ely, Cllr Lis Every, stating that City of Ely now was fully responsible for the Maltings. However, the draft Budget still showed this as an area funded by the Council. The Financial Services Manager reported that an allocation for insurance in respect of The Maltings had been including in the budget in error and would be removed.

In summing-up, Councillor Palmer commended staff on the joint effort to fund the Budget for the next two years. He was greatly reassured as Leader of the Council to know that the Council was in such a strong position in difficult times, and was the envy of other Councils within the County.

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: (19) – Cllrs Alderson, Allan, C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Brown, Cornell, Edwards, Ellis, Every, Hobbs, B Hunt, T Hunt, Morris, Palmer, Parramint, Roberts, Rouse, Schumann.

AGAINST: (14) – Cllrs Allen, Austen, Beckett, Dupré, J Friend-Smith, S Friend-Smith, Goodge, Harris, Morrison, Stevens, Williams, Gareth Wilson, Pauline Wilson and Wright.

ABSTENTIONS: (0) None.

The Motion was declared to be carried.

It was resolved:

1. That the formal Budget resolution, which calculates the Council Tax requirement, as set out in Appendix 1 of the officer's report, be adopted.
2. That the draft Revenue Budget, set out in Appendix 2 of the officer's report, which includes a Council Tax freeze be approved.
3. That the Capital Programme and financing, as set out at Appendix 3 of the officer's report, be approved.
4. That the Statement of Reserves, as set out in Appendix 4 of the officer's report, be approved.
5. That the Fees and Charges 2015/16, as set out in Appendix 5 of the officer's report, be approved.
6. That the programme for schemes to be funded from the former Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, as set out in Appendix 6 of the officer's report, be approved.
7. That the use of the Council's discretionary powers (S47 Local Government Finance Act) to provide transitional relief to small and medium sized properties be approved and that delegated authority be given to the Financial Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Finance Committee to determine the final guidelines for transitional relief for 2015/16 and 2016/17 which continue the existing scheme and follow the guidance issued by the DCLG.

81. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16**

Council considered a report, P195 previously circulated, detailing the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Allen referred to paragraph 9.3 of the Pay Policy Statement and the fact that the Council could have a specific policy on pay ratios between the highest and lowest graded posts. Therefore, he suggested that the Council should adopt a policy to seek to reduce the ratios to show that it valued all staff, and that this could be considered by Regulatory and Support Services Committee.

It was resolved:

That the 2015/16 Pay Policy Statement be approved.

The meeting concluded at 8.37pm.

Chairman.....

Date 21 April 2015