



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of  
East Cambridgeshire District Council held at  
Littleport Leisure Centre, Camel Road, Littleport,  
CB6 1EW on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 6.00pm

**PRESENT**

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

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, tributes were given, and a minute's silence held, as a mark of respect following the passing of former District Councillor Philip Lewis, Liberal Democrat Member for Cheveley from 1999 to 2003.

Cllr Anna Bailey, Leader of Council: *"I didn't know Philip terribly well, but I did have the pleasure of his company on several occasions in recent years. I found him to be a very kind-hearted and passionate man. He had enormous courage of conviction and I am sure we all, as a Council, thank him for his service to the residents of East Cambridgeshire and send our condolences to his family."*

Cllr Charlotte Cane (read aloud on her behalf by Cllr Lorna Dupré): *"Philip Lewis was District Councillor for Cheveley Ward for 4 years, with his great friend and tennis partner Edward Twentyman. Together they were a formidable team working for the people in their Ward and the wider District. Philip Chaired the Personnel Committee at East Cambs and led the delivery of significant improvements to our operations. Philip lived in Reach, where he played a lead role in the village's purchase of the Dyke's End to keep it open as a pub and in setting up the village tennis club and installing the tennis court."*

*After standing down as a Councillor, Philip studied law and used his qualification to advise people through the Citizens Advice Bureau. He supported many people in successfully standing up against poor employers and others in authority. He loved that voluntary work and often told me how vulnerable people were to financial and sometimes physical abuse and how vital the CAB's work was to assist those people in getting justice.*

*Philip will be missed by many of us and especially by his children, Naomi and Jonathan."*

## 19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Former District Councillor Tom Kerby asked the following question:

“With the current Parliamentary Constituency Boundary review under way, would the Council support the inclusion of Newmarket moving from the constituency of West Suffolk to South East Cambridgeshire? This would be the first step in joining Newmarket with Ely under the Council of East Cambridgeshire.”

The Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey, replied:

“Thank you for your question Tom and welcome back to Council.

This Council has always recognised the close bond between our towns and villages in the south of our District and the town of Newmarket, and has always sought to build positive relations and close working with our Suffolk neighbour. To many, the boundary between our District and the town are something of an anomaly. Cllrs Alan Sharp and Amy Starkey in particular, work closely with both West Suffolk and Newmarket Town Council and I also know that Cllrs David Brown and Lavinia Edwards, for example, are working with Exning Parish Council on cycle routes. So, there is close working and co-operation at both Officer and Member levels.

Nevertheless, I don't honestly believe that the current parliamentary constituency boundary review is necessarily the most appropriate mechanism to address this issue. I say this for three pragmatic reasons:

Firstly, we support the current proposal which for the first time keeps our District in one constituency and we would be reluctant to make counter proposals that could put this in jeopardy. Later in this meeting there is a paper about the Council's response to the review consultation.

Secondly, whilst that may be arithmetically possible, all Members will know that changing our proposed boundary will have a domino effect on surrounding areas that could be problematic.

In this case and finally, I think it would have the effect of splitting the constituency across 2 counties which, particularly given we have a Combined Authority, would probably be undesirable. I also understand that the proposal would potentially split Suffolk into Essex and Cambridgeshire.

So, for all of those reasons I don't think it's something we could take forward at this time. Many thanks for your question.”

Upon being invited by the Chairman, Tom Kerby explained that previous attempts to move Newmarket from Suffolk to Cambridgeshire had been unsuccessful but there was a desire to revisit it since geographically Newmarket was an anomaly within Suffolk, and the District and County Councils in Suffolk were not felt to serve the town well. Residents generally looked to the triangle of Ely – Newmarket – Cambridge for retail and leisure rather than towards the

larger towns in Suffolk, and there was a good relationship with East Cambs District Council. The Parliamentary Constituency Boundary review was the first opportunity to raise the issue, and hence he had brought the question to the Council.

**20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs David Brown, Charlotte Cane, Julia Huffer, Joshua Schumann, Paola Trimarco and Alison Whelan.

**21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**22. MINUTES – 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**23. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Members, Officers and the public to the first face-to-face meeting of the Council for over a year and reminded them of the protocols for speaking.

**24. PETITIONS**

No petitions had been received.

**25. MOTIONS**

No Motions had been received.

**26. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

Questions were received, and responses given, as follows:

**i) Question to the Chairman of the Operational Services Committee from Cllr Mark Inskip:**

“At the Full Council meeting on 23 February I asked a question to the Chair of Operational Services Committee about the recent email outage, raising my concerns that further actions were needed to guarantee that the Council’s email system was sufficiently resilient to future outages. In his response he dismissed my concerns in a politicised answer.

Last week the Council experienced a further outage which left email services unavailable for the best part of a day and a half along with

several more days to recover emails sent during the period of the outage. Given this latest incident does he now support my previous call for a much more thorough review?"

**Response from the Chairman of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr David Ambrose Smith:**

"Thank you, Cllr Inskip, for your question.

As Chairman of the Operational Services Committee I do not feel it necessary for a review as I am satisfied with the explanation given by the ICT Team regarding the cause and the action they undertook in respect of the recent Email outage. A full report from the ICT Team is appended to the answer for you to look at."

ICT report:

At approximately 14:20 on Wednesday 7th July, the Exchange (email) server experienced an issue with the email index and the datastore, preventing clients and software (such as Outlook and OWA log-ins) from connecting to the server. After immediately attempting standard recovery steps for this kind of fault the ICT Team made contact with Microsoft support that afternoon, however unfortunately they were unable to recover the datastore that evening. From this point the team moved to a two-pronged approach: continue with recovery attempts on the failed datastore while also attempting restore from the most recent known good backup of the server (this being 10:00pm 6th July 2021).

Even with Microsoft's continued assistance it was not possible to repair the datastore. Our ICT System Administration Team was able to restore the backup and undertook further work to bring the newly restored server into the live network. Full functionality was restored at 9.30am on 9th July 2021. No Emails were lost as these were caught with our Mimecast system and the Support Team have been restoring user emails to their Outlook mailboxes.

The issue has been caused by the import of .PST "Personal Folder" archives onto the server - a stage of our work towards the migration from our onsite Exchange email server to Microsoft Office 365. The work towards the migration to Microsoft Office 365 will continue, however we will be re-evaluating this stage of the project to ensure staff will continue to have access to the archived emails that they require after the migration project has completed without further impacting our current email server.

At this point in time the ICT team do not have a set date for when the migration to Microsoft Office 365 will complete but are working with our Microsoft partner to accomplish the migration as soon as practicable. We were not proposing to do any further investigations or reviews, as we have already identified the cause of the issue (the importing of the .PST folders causing index corruption) and have paused that element of the

365 migration project. We will be working with our Microsoft Partner to be able to continue moving to exchange 365 without users being unable to access the personal folders/archive folders.

**ii) Question to the Chairman of the Planning Committee from Cllr John Trapp:**

“The District Council issued a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on self-build homes recently, and to my mind self-build is a means of encouraging more housing, and affordable housing. Would the Chair of Planning state how many of the self-build plots in planning applications have been taken up, and how he considers that the self-build programme is working, and whether it fulfils its aims?”

**Response from the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr Bill Hunt:**

“Thank you Cllr Trapp for your question. I was quite surprised that you asked it because you could have found the answer from Officers to save some time.

I can tell you that the permissions that were given were 43 in 2018, 64 in 2019, and 93 in 2020. So far in 2021 there have been 7. I also asked Officers to give me information on how much CIL Self-Build Relief we have approved. 93 in 2017/18, 78 in 2018/19, and 94 in 2019/20. So not only are we giving consent, but people are building. So, I'd say it was successful. As you know we have a policy in our Local Plan which requires any development of over 100 dwellings to provide 5% of the site as self-build. The policy is working well, fulfilling its aims and long may it continue. I share with you your enthusiasm for self-build and, like you, I welcome it.”

**iii) Question to the Leader of Council from Cllr Simon Harries:**

“Please confirm how many sales have been completed for £100k houses in this district, and please also explain the actions taken by the Council to address mortgage approval issues encountered with respect to £100k homes.”

**Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:**

“Thank you Cllr Harries for your question.

I'm somewhat surprised that Cllr Harries doesn't seem to know that this question would be best directed to the Combined Authority - the £100k Homes initiative is a project of the Combined Authority not this Council. Of course we have, as a Council and a constituent member of the Combined Authority, fully supported £100k Homes, as it gives our residents - typically residents that are so often shut out of the housing market completely - the opportunity to get onto the property ladder at an affordable price, with the benefit that the discount stays with the property throughout its lifetime, allowing many more people into the future to benefit as well. So East Cambs has supported the policy, but East

Cambs is not the authority responsible for involvement in the sales process itself.

To try to be helpful though, turning to the first part of the question: I am aware, that even though no one has yet moved in, buyers are progressing through the sales process. To answer the second part of the question, the Council has not taken any action relating to the sales process because, and I reiterate, it is not the responsibility of East Cambs District Council; this is a Combined Authority project. I am aware though that Combined Authority Officers are working hard to do what they can to enable the completion of sales.

I would like to remind everyone on this subject - particularly those that seem to enjoy casting doubt on social media about the sales of these properties to first time buyers trying to get onto the housing ladder - that these are real people involved in this process, buying their first home, and I think everyone would do well to remember that when taking to social media to pass comment.

I have every confidence that completions will go ahead and that proud new property owners will be taking up residence in Fordham, and I very much look forward to the day when the first people move in.”

## **27. CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2023 (UPDATED)**

Council considered a report (W38, previously circulated) summarising the progress made against the 2019-2021 commitments, highlighting the challenges that had been faced, and detailing the updated Corporate Plan 2021-2023.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and drew Members’ attention to the details of progress in paragraph 4.2 and the inherent challenges detailed in paragraph 4.3.

Cllr Anna Bailey moved the recommendations in the report, seconded by Cllr David Ambrose Smith. She thanked the NHS and the local communities, as well as Members and Officers, for all they had done to protect the vulnerable in the District during the course of the pandemic. Over £21m had been paid out in grants benefitting over 3000 local businesses, the Council had worked with Parish Councils to support Community Hubs, and Officers had represented and supported the Council with professionalism, resilience and compassion. Front-line services including waste, recycling, environmental work, parks and open spaces, housing, markets, planning and building control had all continued. Benefits and grants had been paid out, rapidly-changing legislation had been navigated, and meetings had continued to be open for all. Having reflected on a very challenging 12 months, and thanked everyone at the Council and across the District for their hard work, care, and support, she looked forward to a better year ahead for all.

A Member spoke in support of the updated Corporate Plan, and in particular the promise to continue to pressure the relevant authorities to implement a safe crossing near the BP roundabout on the A10 Ely bypass. However, another Member stated that keeping the provision of the safe crossing as part of the A10 dualling project was counterintuitive in both the timing of delivery and the promotion of active travel options. Regarding the commitment to support A14/A142 junction improvements, a Member suggested that support should also be given to other road improvements that would be beneficial for the District, such as at Quy and at the A14/Milton Road.

Several Members expressed concerns or disagreements with parts of the Plan whilst agreeing with and supporting other elements. The cross-party work on bus services and on cycleway and footpath proposals was mentioned favourably as having been enhanced by collaborative working and the incorporation of a range of views.

A Member spoke against the loss of the green space at Mepal and its proposed conversion to a crematorium which would be in competition with those at March and Huntingdon. The closure of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Ely was also criticised, as was the lack of reference to the flooding that had occurred over the Christmas and New Year 2020-21 period.

Debate on Community Land Trusts (CLTs) centred on a general agreement that in principle a CLT was a good idea, but with disagreement as to whether all local CLTs fulfilled the aims and objectives effectively. Swaffham Prior's community heating project and the Haddenham CLT were cited positively, whereas some Members were concerned about the close ties between the managements of the Council and East Cambs CLT, general lack of scrutiny of CLT management, and the acrimony in Wilburton and concerns in Stretham and Kennett relating to CLT developments. Several Members emphasised the importance of CLTs being community-led and encouraging a large community membership, whereas an example was given of two Members having been refused membership of East Cambs CLT which had suggested that it was not transparent and open to all. A Member responded to the criticism of the governance of some CLTs and explained that the formation of a CLT was a highly regulated process requiring sign-off from several different bodies; they were membership organisations and needed to abide by the legislation under which they were formed.

Some Members questioned the mention of £100k Homes twice within the Corporate Plan despite the Leader's earlier assertion (in her response to a Member's Question) that £100k Homes were entirely a matter for the Combined Authority. Further related to Housing, the lack of houses available at less than full market price in Phase 1 of the MoD development in Ely was questioned, as was the lack of a promise to provide more affordable housing.

In relation to the "Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire" section of the Plan, a Member stated that the 2021/22 commitments were good, and in line with the recent approval given by the Operational Services Committee to the

Environment Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, but the promises were simply a repeat of previous promises and therefore demonstrated a lack of ambition. Recent issues worldwide, such as the high temperatures in North America and the flooding in Germany and Belgium, had highlighted the need for clear strategies to address climate change and commit to net zero carbon. Following the interim findings of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate, the Combined Authority had committed to make its own operations net zero by 2030 so, in the view of the Member, a similar clear commitment should also have been included in the Corporate Plan for this Council. In addition, the Council had declared a Climate Emergency in late 2019 and the commitments within that should have been included as promises in the updated Corporate Plan. Similarly, ambitious targets for charging points for electric cars were needed since East Cambs provision currently did not compare favourably with other Districts such as North Norfolk. The Member also mentioned that, whilst understanding the difficulties caused by the need to wait for the Government's announcement of the Waste Strategy, other rural councils had made more progress than this Council in converting to a zero-emission waste vehicle fleet.

A Member expressed support for the Plan, stating that it would stimulate economic recovery and growth as well as improving transport. Working with neighbouring authorities on rail improvements would be vital, as would support for the East West Rail project since 65% of freight from Felixstowe travelled by road and therefore traffic issues related to that on the major roads caused knock-on effects in the towns and villages of the District.

Speaking as seconder of the Motion, Cllr David Ambrose Smith stated that he was proud to support the updated Corporate Plan. All Councillors had been involved in the success of previous Plans via their commitments to the Council's Committees and Working Parties and he hoped that there would continue to be positive involvement in relation to the updated Plan. Regarding the mention of other crematoria, he pointed out that the neighbouring facilities were quite some distance from many communities in the District. Regarding flooding, he reminded Members of the Council's work with the Internal Drainage Boards and also drew Members' attention to the Corporate Plan's mention of water management and flood prevention infrastructure in relation to the CIL Infrastructure List.

Summing up, Cllr Anna Bailey firstly responded to many of the points raised during the debate:

- The Council's commercial agenda remained "commercial for community benefit" and she was proud that it had enabled the freezing of the District Council element of local Council Tax.
- Every sizeable housing development received objections at the Planning stage, this was not unique to CLT developments.
- The new Mayor of the Combined Authority was not in favour of continuing the 100k Homes project, it was therefore an item on the agenda for the next Finance & Assets Committee meeting in order to continue the scheme within the District.

- The ability to continue delivering services to residents was, in part, due to the hard work of the trading companies. In particular, East Cambs Trading Company had at the 2021 year-end collectively provided just over £3m of financial benefit (£930k in this financial year) via its operations as Palace Green Homes, Ely Markets, and Parks & Open Spaces.

She then explained that the Corporate Plan would maintain the Council's focus on five key areas: investing in all aspects of the District's hamlets, villages, towns and the city of Ely; providing genuinely affordable housing for those living or working in the District; addressing the climate emergency with a £1m investment into home energy efficiency improvements and £100k investment into energy efficiency improvements at The Grange as well as initiatives such as wildflower management and orchard planting; improving public transport, cycling and walking; and working with partners on the road and rail infrastructure needed for the District. Finally, she stated her intention to present the Council's priorities directly to the Combined Authority Mayor in a published prospectus, with the promise to work in a spirit of partnership but robustly fighting for the projects and policies that were important to East Cambs and in need of Combined Authority investment and support.

It was resolved:

- i) That the updated Corporate Plan, set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
- ii) That the completed actions and progress made during the past 12 months be noted.
- iii) That the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution (ref: Article 1 paragraph 1.05) to reflect the new Corporate Plan.

## **28. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS – AUDIT COMMITTEE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES**

Council considered a report (W39, previously circulated) containing the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for the newly-established Audit Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and also drew Members' attention to an amendment to the report's recommendations, proposed by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr David Ambrose Smith, that had been circulated to all Members by email that morning:

- 2.1 As per recommendation.

- 2.2 Add  
“and therefore, resolves to amend the Constitution, specifically the terms of reference of the Finance & Assets Committee and Audit Committee to exclude joint membership of the respective Committees and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council from membership of the Audit Committee”.
- 2.3 New  
“The Council authorises the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary and consequential amendments to the Constitution to implement the Council’s resolution”.

Cllr Inskip raised a Point of Order that the item was about SRAs but the amendment did not relate to SRAs, instead it introduced constitutional amendments, and he questioned how a proposal to change the Terms of Reference would be constitutionally valid when introduced in this way. He stated that the Local Government Act 1972 required proposed constitutional changes to be included in the summons of the meeting, which had not been the case in this instance, but, when questioned, he was unable to provide the exact reference. The Democratic Services Manager stated that it was within the Terms of Reference for Council to amend the Constitution and she was not aware of any such legal restriction, therefore the Constitution prevailed. A Member suggested to the Chairman that an adjournment to research the situation would be helpful, and that, if uncertainty remained, Cllr Bailey should consider withdrawing the amendment and taking it to a future Council meeting as a paper with the full notice to Members.

*7:07-7:33pm an adjournment was taken.*

On resumption, at the invitation of the Chairman, the Monitoring Officer read the following statement:

“The Constitution was drafted in accordance with legislation. I do not believe that the Local Government Act 1972 would be so prescriptive of the operations of individual Councils and in the absence of any specific reference from Cllr Inskip in his Point of Order, I can advise in relation to this particular matter that the revised recommendation can be put.

The other question that Council need to consider is whether it has a right to amend its Constitution – this is clearly set out in 3.1(i) of the Council Terms of Reference.

Finally, is whether sufficient notice has been given for this proposal to change the Constitution, I am of the view that the recommendation of the IRP raises this issue, i.e. conflicts of interest, as set out in the report which complies with the access to information of 5 clear days’ notice, therefore my advice is that the Council can consider the revised recommendation (subject to a Proposer and Seconder).”

Cllr Bailey then spoke to propose the amended recommendations and also stated that her Motion would shorten recommendation 2.1 by removing reference to alternative SRAs and to backdated payment. It would therefore read “That Council approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as set out in paragraph 3.5.” She thanked the IRP members for their work and stated that it was important to note their concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest arising from Members taking up positions on both the Audit Committee and the Finance & Assets Committee. She commented that she had already considered the issue when making committee appointments from the Conservative Group, and she was sure that all Members would agree with the need to adopt the highest standards of probity.

Cllr Inskip stated that under Procedure Rule 11.4 he proposed to refer the matter to the Finance & Assets Committee for consideration. Cllr Jones seconded the proposal. Cllr Inskip stated that the conflict of interests justification for excluding joint membership of the Finance & Assets and Audit Committees failed to recognise that other committees also considered matters that would be addressed by the Audit Committee. For example, matters relating to the East Cambs Street Scene trading company were reported to the Operational Services Committee.

The Democratic Services Manager reminded Members that Procedure Rule 11.4 only allowed referral to a committee when the matter lay within the remit of that committee. Appointments to committees and amendment of the Constitution were matters for Full Council and therefore could not be referred elsewhere. Cllr Inskip consequently proposed deferring the matter to a future meeting of Full Council, and Cllr Jones seconded the proposal.

Several Members spoke in favour of the proposed deferral, stating the importance of a full and detailed written briefing, published with the Agenda papers, when considering a change to the Constitution and the way the Council operated. Less than 12h notice of the amended recommendations had not been sufficient for public involvement, should there have been any interest, and the principle of restricting membership of committees required careful and informed consideration. They reiterated the proposer’s point that the Audit Committee did not only consider the business of the Finance & Assets Committee, and therefore, if conflicts of interest could restrict joint memberships, then other committees would need to be considered in a similar vein. They also questioned the relevance of the IRP members’ comments on potential conflicts of interest, since their brief had been purely to consider the remuneration rather than address constitutional matters.

Other Members stated that there would be no functional change to the operation of the Council and its committees, it was purely a reasonable and proportionate response to the concern raised by the IRP. The change was not dramatic and would make the Council fairer and more transparent. Some mentioned that external trainers employed to train the Audit Committee Members and, previously, the Finance & Assets Committee Members had also

indicated that separation between memberships of the two committees would be preferable. A Member also clarified that Audit Committee would be considering the governance of the trading companies rather than their financial performance.

Speaking as the seconder of the Amendment, Cllr Jones stated that recommendation 2.2 of the report only mentioned noting the IRP comment regarding potential conflicts of interest. He reiterated that the amended recommendations proposed by Cllr Bailey had implications for the Constitution, and he questioned whether it would ever be possible to ensure complete independence in all roles since many Members held several roles within the Council.

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

Cllr Downey then proposed an Amendment which further revised recommendation 2.2 to additionally exclude the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council and all Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees from being members of the Audit Committee. He stated that the Amendment would ensure consistency as well as true independence for the Audit Committee. Cllr Inskip seconded the proposal.

A Member responded that the Amendment went too far in its restrictions. The aims of the Audit Committee were clear, and separating the membership from the Finance & Assets Committee as well as excluding the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council would be sufficient.

Another Member spoke in support of the Amendment, reiterating earlier points regarding the limited content and advance notice of the main proposal as well as the lack of consistency in requiring total separation of Audit Committee from only one other committee rather than from them all.

Speaking as the seconder of the Amendment, Cllr Inskip thanked the Member who had previously commented about concerns raised by external trainers, and said that it highlighted a need for consistencies in governance across the Council, not just the Audit Committee. The Amendment sought to address this. He reiterated the view that it would have been preferable to have a better-researched proposal to consider but, if a decision was needed at this meeting, then independence from all committees would be best.

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

Cllr Bailey raised a Point of Order requesting that the Motion should now be put. The Chairman agreed with a Member's objection on the basis that no debate had yet taken place on the Motion.

During subsequent debate on the Motion, the lack of adequate notice and detail of the revised proposal were again raised as issues. Several Members also questioned why a panel that was formed to consider Member allowances

should additionally comment on committee arrangements or be the basis of proposed constitutional change. It was also highlighted that the audit function and financial decision-making had been within the remit of a single committee for years without apparent concern for potential conflicts of interest. A Member commented that, in the varied business of Council, conflicts of interest often occurred but Members were able to address that on a case-by-case basis and were familiar with using integrity in decision-making.

A Member reiterated that the trainers of both the Audit Committee and the Finance & Assets Committee had also raised the issue of potential conflicts of interest, and stated that consideration of the forward agenda plan for the Audit Committee indicated that ~90% of the business concerned Finance & Assets Committee matters.

Speaking as the seconder of the Motion, Cllr David Ambrose Smith stated his support on the basis that the proposed changes followed the advice of the IRP and the trainers of both Committees.

Summing up as the proposer of the Motion, Cllr Anna Bailey reminded Members that the purpose of the changes was to improve openness and transparency. The concerns had been raised by trainers before the IRP's recommendations were received, and when the Audit Committee had been formed she had made the decision not to appoint Members to both committees. She had the greatest respect for all Councillors and believed that removing the potential for conflicts of interest of Audit Committee members represented good governance.

The Chairman clarified that in addition to the previously-circulated amended recommendations, Cllr Bailey's Motion had included a further revision to recommendation 2.1, the consequence of which would be that the Audit Committee allowances would take effect after the meeting rather than being backdated to the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Council meeting.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be carried.  
It was resolved:

- i) That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report, be approved.
- ii) That the IRP comment regarding potential conflicts of interest in the membership of the Audit Committee and the Finance & Assets Committee in paragraph 3.7 of the report be noted and therefore the Constitution be amended, specifically the terms of reference of the Finance & Assets Committee and Audit Committee, to exclude joint membership of the respective Committees and to exclude the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council from the membership of the Audit Committee.

iii) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the necessary and consequential amendments to the Constitution to implement the Council's resolution.

**29. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND 2023 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES – EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES**

Council considered a report (W40, previously circulated), introduced by the Infrastructure & Strategy Manager, which detailed the proposed submission to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) consultation on the initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith moved the recommendation in the report, seconded by Cllr Jo Webber. She stated that as a Ward Member for Littleport she welcomed the opportunity to have all of the East Cambridgeshire District within one parliamentary constituency since she felt it would be better for the constituents, although Stephen Barclay had been an excellent and conscientious MP for Littleport and would be much missed. She also felt that the proposed new name more accurately reflected the constituency.

A Member commented that the NE Cambs villages that would move into the new constituency generally welcomed the move since they often felt overlooked in a constituency that seemed focussed on Fenland when they mainly looked to Ely for their services. Another Member reiterated the earlier comments regarding Stephen Barclay MP's services to Littleport.

Speaking as seconder of the Motion, Cllr Jo Webber stated her support for having all District Wards within the same constituency which would make more sense to local residents. She thanked Officers, in particular the Infrastructure & Strategy Manager, for the considerable time and effort that had been devoted to this subject for several years.

It was unanimously resolved:

That the submission to the BCE, attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be agreed.

**30. CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY REPORTS FROM THE CONSTITUENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COMBINED AUTHORITY**

Council received the reports, previously circulated, from the Combined Authority's Audit & Governance Committee (25<sup>th</sup> June 2021), Overview & Scrutiny Committee (28<sup>th</sup> June 2021) and Combined Authority Board (2<sup>nd</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021). There were no questions for the Council's representatives.

It was unanimously resolved:

That the contents of the reports be noted.

8:21pm Cllr Charlesworth left the meeting.

31. **ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY**

The Council considered report W41, previously circulated, detailing the actions taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency in respect of Additional Restrictions Grants (Rounds 4 and 5) and meetings held after 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

A Member raised a concern about the speed and transparency of handling of the Additional Restrictions Grants (ARGs) and requested that Internal Audit be instructed to review the management of the grants. Another Member supported this view, adding that, although Officers and Members had worked tirelessly, all organisations should seek to improve and therefore the new Audit Committee should examine the process.

Several Members spoke positively about their direct or indirect personal experiences of receiving a grant, and of the Council's general level of support for local businesses during the pandemic. They acknowledged that there had been some issues at the start of the grant-distribution process but these had been discussed by Full Council and were resolved. Since then the handling of the grants had been swift and efficient whilst maintaining the appropriate due diligence for managing large amounts of public money.

The Chief Executive informed Members that a review of COVID grants was already included in the Audit Plan to be presented to the Audit Committee.

It was resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8:32pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....