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EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 20 OCTOBER 2022 – DECISION LIST

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman delivered a tribute and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Agenda Item No.	Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	No questions were received from members of the public.	-
2.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members	Apologies were received from Cllrs Matthew Downey, Daniel Schumann, Joshua Schumann, and John Trapp.	-
3.	-	Declarations of Interest	To receive declarations of interests from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.	No declarations of interest were made.	-
4.	-	Minutes – 14 July 2022	To receive the Minutes of the last Council meeting.	It was resolved: That, subject to the correction of “funding” to “finding” in the last paragraph of page 10, the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.	Democratic Services Manager

Agenda Item No.	Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
5.	-	Chairman's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	The Chairman announced that he had attended the High Sherriff's Justice Service on 16 th October on behalf of the Council.	-
6.	-	Parking Enforcement	To receive an oral update from Superintendent James Sutherland, Cambridgeshire Police, regarding parking enforcement in the District.	An update on the development of a new police service volunteer role of Road Safety Officer, to include parking enforcement powers, was received from Superintendent James Sutherland.	-
7.	-	To Receive Petitions	To receive public petitions.	No public petitions had been received.	-
8.	-	Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10	The following motions were received and considered: i) <u>Cost of Living</u> (text of Motion at end of Decision List) ii) <u>Cost of Living Emergency</u> (text of Motion at end of Decision List)	Altered Motion carried. Altered Motion lost.	Chief Executive
9.	-	To answer Questions from Members	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Six Questions from Members were received and responses given as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
10.	X92	Recommendations from Committees and Other Member Bodies	To consider and take decisions on items recommended from Committees and other Member Bodies.	1. FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE – 4 October 2022 (a) <u>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) Review 2023/24</u>	Director Finance

Agenda Item No.	Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
				<p>the CPO, including the publication and service of all relevant notices and to support the presentation of the Parish Council's case at any local public inquiry;</p> <p>(b) serve a requisition for information (in accordance with section 16 Local Government Act 1972) on the reputed owner and other parties that may have an interest in the land as part of the preparatory steps associated with the making and promotion of a CPO;</p> <p>(c) approve terms for the acquisition of legal interests by agreement, either on behalf of the Council or in conjunction with the Parish Council, including for the purposes of resolving any objections to the CPO;</p> <p>(d) take all necessary steps to resolve any compulsory purchase compensation claims, including, if necessary, by making (or responding to) a reference to the Upper Tribunals (Lands Chamber);</p> <p>(e) enter into a suitable agreement with the Parish Council regarding reimbursement of all costs incurred by the District Council regardless of whether or not the CPO proceeds to completion;</p> <p>(f) transfer the relevant land to the Parish Council if the CPO proceeds to completion</p>	

Agenda Item No.	Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
				via a back-back sale, subject to reimbursement of purchase costs and all other relevant expenses and the inclusion of a restrictive covenant in the transfer to prohibit development or uses other than as a burial ground.	
11.	X93	The Making (Adoption) of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan	To formally adopt the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire.	It was resolved: a) That Haddenham Parish Council be congratulated on its preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and a successful referendum outcome, becoming the fifth Parish Council to do so in East Cambridgeshire. b) That the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be formally made part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire with immediate effect.	Strategic Planning Manager
12.	X94	Community Governance Review – Burrough Green / Westley Waterless Parish Boundary	To consider changes to the parish boundary between the parishes of Burrough Green and Westley Waterless, and consider requesting a related District Ward boundary amendment	It was resolved: a) That the parish boundary between the parishes of Burrough Green and Westley Waterless be amended in accordance with the original Community Governance Review. b) That the additional boundary change suggested by Burrough Green Parish Council not be approved. c) That the Community Governance Order, as shown at Appendix 3 of the report, to amend the parish boundary between Burrough Green and Westley Waterless, be approved.	Electoral Services Officer

Agenda Item No.	Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
				d) That a formal request be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for a related alteration to the District Ward boundary, between the wards of Bottisham and Woodditton, to align it with the new parish boundary between Burrough Green and Westley Waterless.	
13.	-	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Update Report	To receive the reports from the Constituent Council representatives on the Combined Authority: Audit & Governance Committee (30/6/22 and 29/7/22) Overview & Scrutiny Committee (25/7/22) Combined Authority Board (27/7/22 and 31/8/22)	It was resolved: That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's representatives be noted.	-
14.	X95	Action taken by the Chief Executive on the Grounds of Urgency	To note the action taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency – COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund	It was resolved: That the actions taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency relating to the COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund detailed in the report be noted.	-

8. NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10

i) **Cost of Living** (Altered Motion - additions in italics and deletions crossed through.)

East Cambridgeshire District Council is determined to ensure the protection of the residents of East Cambridgeshire from the cost of living challenge driven by Covid and Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, the combined effects of which have led to rising energy prices and residents facing significant cost of living pressures.

This Council is thankful for the significant work by the Government to support the residents of East Cambridgeshire. It notes the benefit of the ~~two-year~~ energy price guarantee and the certainty it will give to residents across the district as well as the enormous help that the £400 energy bill discount will provide to every household.

It further notes the additional support of the £650 cost of living payment for those in receipt of means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioner households and £150 for recipients of disability benefits in East Cambridgeshire and thanks the Government for providing equivalent support for those not on the mains energy grid. It also notes the protection of jobs in East Cambridgeshire that the six-month protection for businesses will provide.

East Cambridgeshire District Council welcomes the plans by Government to secure long term energy independence for the country by maximising domestic energy production through North Sea oil and gas, as well as nuclear and renewables.

This Council is also doing its part to protect our residents from the cost of living challenge, specifically, it:

- Continues to invest in our Housing and Community Advice Service fully utilising our Housing and Community Advice Bus, Community Hubs and advisors at The Grange;
- Supports the provision of warm hubs in the District;
- Works with partners in Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) to help residents with energy bills and obtain EPC reports;
- Provides advice to residents through our Energy Advice Officers to access grant funding to undertake energy efficiency measures;

Furthermore, Council approves:

- *the immediate allocation of £10,000 to a "Cost of Living Support Fund" to be managed by the Council's Housing & Community Advice service. The criteria for the award of funds to be agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Operational Services Committee.*

Council notes:

- This Council has frozen its share of Council Tax bills for the last 9 years, the only district, unitary, or county council in the country to have done so;

- This Council has a long track record of having a balanced budget for 2 financial years at a time;
- This Council has no external borrowing;
- This Council has a prudent level of reserves in the General Fund equivalent to 10% of our operating budget.

Therefore, this Council ~~resolves to freeze its share of Council Tax for 2023/24 for a tenth consecutive year.~~ *is minded to freeze its share of Council Tax for 2023/24 for a tenth consecutive year, subject to final decision following the Government budget on 31st October.*

Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey
 Secunder: Cllr Julia Huffer

b) Cost of Living Emergency (Altered Motion - additions in italics.)

This Council notes that:

- Annual price inflation is at a level not seen for 40 years.
- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54%.
- On 1 October 2022, energy prices increased by a further 27%.
- Over a period of just over six months the average standard tariff has increased by £1,222 to £2,500 for the average household.
- The Government suspended the pensions ‘triple lock’ for 2022/3, meaning East Cambridgeshire’s 18,000 pensioners have seen a rise of 3.1% this year (instead of 8.3% under the triple lock formula). This will cost pensioners in East Cambridgeshire hundreds of pounds.
- In 2021/22 Foodbanks in East Cambridgeshire distributed 2,981 food parcels (Trussell Trust, 2022).

In addition, people living in rural areas such as East Cambridgeshire are disproportionately affected by fuel price increases because of poor public transport and longer distances to reach work, education and health services.

This Council therefore declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’ and asks the Chief Executive to write to relevant government ministers and our local MPs to ask for urgent action to relieve the cost-of-living crisis through such measures as:

- Provide immediate financial support for consumers of heating oil, bottled gas, solid fuels, those reliant on generators for electricity and those on prepayment meters.
- Consider reducing VAT to 17.5% putting money back into the pockets of average families, boosting the economy and helping to support local retailers
- Deliver a real and immediate increase in investment in UK renewables and an energy plan for the UK which reduces costs for the end user and leads to the decarbonisation of the UK energy network in the long term.

Council also resolves to ask the Chief Executive to develop proposals to:

- Expand the East Cambridgeshire Council Tax Reduction Scheme to reduce the tax burden for lower income households
- To protect and expand funding for partnership grants delivering advice services to residents in next year's budget and future years
- Work with partners to improve access to affordable food across East Cambridgeshire

Furthermore, the Council approves:

- *The immediate allocation of £20,000 to a "Cost of Living Support Fund" to be managed by the Council's Housing & Community Advice service. The criteria for the award of funds to be agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Operational Services Committee.*

Finally, Council calls for an East Cambridgeshire Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit, with stakeholders, including all tiers of local government, Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Local Trades Unions, and Chambers of Commerce along with local Members of Parliament.

Proposer: Cllr Mark Inskip

Secunder: Cllr Charlotte Cane

9. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

i) Question to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Julia Huffer:

"I note from a statement from the Leader of the Cambridgeshire County Council on 30th September 2022 that she thanks Mayor Nik Johnson for his swift response to the cancellation of numerous bus services in our District. Can the Leader of the Council provide clarity to one of my residents who has information that Stagecoach had made numerous attempts to speak to Mayor Johnson and his team about this situation as far back as May 2022 and, having failed to get a response, subsequently informed the Combined Authority in August 2022 of their intention to cancel routes which affect my residents in Fordham, Isleham and many others in the District. Can she please give an update on what is happening with the bus services in Cambridgeshire and can she also clarify the situation regarding the various funding sources from Central Government and the success or otherwise of the Combined Authority in obtaining such funds for local transport services?"

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

"It is my understanding that the Mayor and CPCA staff were made aware of the issues being reported by Stagecoach back in May of this year. The first public signs of distress in the bus network surfaced in the form of the issues with the Ely Zipper and the Wisbech 68 service in April and May of this year. This Council had to step in to ensure there was no loss of service for Ely Zipper users. It is a matter of huge regret that the CPCA failed to secure any of the £millions allocated to other areas for their Bus

Service Improvement Plans, and that it was not part of the list of CAs granted Sustainable Transport Settlements. Some areas got hundreds of millions. Following receipt of the External Auditor's letter to CPCA citing concerns about conduct of the Mayor's Office and Governance issues, Government has been withholding funding from the CPCA, so we shouldn't really be surprised that it wasn't on the list.

I am pleased to report the successful outcome of yesterday's CPCA Board meeting where all but one of the 18 axed Stagecoach routes and the 5 routes earmarked for changes in the amber list have been successfully retendered. Residents will need to study timetables and routes carefully when the information is released on Monday, as not everything will be an exact like for like. One problem, with the 39 service between March and Chatteris remains, but it is a work in progress. This stabilises the situation until the end of March next year. The Ely Zipper and the 68 are also now being supported by the CPCA until the same time, so that decisions about their future can be taken alongside the rest of the network.

The Mayor has put bus services front and centre of his emerging Local Transport Plan and has particularly stated his intention to improve rural bus services. Unfortunately, with all the turmoil at the CPCA, the work on franchising has stalled in the last 18 months, and now needs to be expedited, but this will take several years to make progress and is far from easy.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership proposals to fund services through a Congestion Charge are enormously unpopular and are not the answer, but it will be up to the Lib Dem led County Council to decide on the imposition of Congestion Charging next year.

I suspect what residents will see, come January 2023, is a Mayor rushing to impose a precept on all households and a County Council moving to impose Congestion Charging. These things would not have been necessary if the CPCA hadn't been in turmoil and had secured central Government funding, and these things are still not necessary. What we should be doing is reviewing the CPCA's revenue budget to free up money, we need to articulate what a good service will look like in a county wide Bus Strategy - this Council has already provided information about that for our patch - we need to massively and rapidly build on our new found relationship with the providers in a new 'strategic partnership', we need to put forward credible bids for future rounds of bus service improvement monies, and we need to rapidly move on with the case for franchising. All these things are possible with a high functioning CPCA. None of them require taxing residents through a precept or a Congestion Charge."

ii) Question to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Lis Every:

"Can the Leader please provide an update on progress with the planning application for new homes, including affordable homes, at the former MoD site in Ely?"

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

"Just by way of background I would remind Members that it was a requirement of the contract that we entered into with the MoD that we seek planning permission for infill housing. We were effectively required to 'test' the Local Plan to establish the extent of what was deliverable in terms of numbers of houses. That is exactly what has taken place. And it was the right thing to do – it has

brought the empty homes back into use and revitalised the whole site, it has enabled 15 of the refurbished homes to be brought forward as Shared Ownership properties for people with ties to the local area, it has facilitated the land swap with the NHS to support the redevelopment plans by them and the County Council – and I understand that the land swap deal actually completed yesterday, which is excellent news – and now it is going to deliver new homes including affordable homes with the open green space remaining intact.

Earlier this month the planning application for 27 new homes, including 33% affordable homes was, cross-party and unanimously granted permission. Plans will come before Council in the future to increase the percentage of affordable housing on the site – a promise we made once planning permission had been secured. I want to thank Officers and all the staff at Palace Green Homes for their stewardship of this project.”

iii) Question to the Leader of the Council from Cllr Ian Bovingdon:

“Can the Leader please give Members an update on the Crematorium project?”

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

“Last week the application for the Crematorium off the A142 near Block Fen was granted planning permission – with almost unanimous cross-party support – for an eco-crematorium, to include natural burials, a memorial garden and a pet cemetery. The plans include on-site electricity generation expected to deliver 70% of the energy needed.

Of course we understand the strong feelings about the old Mepal Outdoor Centre which was a much loved facility for years. I loved it too. We tried very hard – cross party – to get it back up and running for outdoor activities, we tendered it twice, including on one occasion with no restrictions on its use, but sadly it just wasn’t deemed to be viable.

Since then, there are now nationally important and protected species using the site such as water vole, otters and a rare pond species – a cause for celebration! The Wildlife Trust requires that the use of the wider site therefore is restricted to ‘passive use’ ie dog walking (on a lead), bird watching and fishing. It is them that is advising the Council on the extent of what is and isn’t possible there.

Work is now progressing on the funding strategy which will come to Finance and Assets Committee with the final business case coming to Full Council next year.

Given that the old use of the site is not compatible with the biodiversity needs of the site, I am delighted that this alternative use has been granted permission and hope that we can bring this new facility forward which is needed in our district. It’s been a long-held ambition of the administration to provide a District crematorium and facility, to try and keep costs low for people, be competitive to other facilities that people have to travel extensively to get to at the moment, and I think it will be a fantastic and nurturing location for people in a time of upset and need.”

iv) Question to the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee from Cllr Mark Inskip:

“Last month the government announced a reckless mini-budget with £45bn of unfunded tax cuts which led to chaos for new homebuyers. Hundreds of fixed-rate mortgage products were withdrawn over the space of a few days, before lenders returned with significantly more expensive deals. Mortgage payers are seeing their monthly payments increase by hundreds of pounds. Even though virtually all the mini-budget tax cuts have been reversed following a massive u-turn this Monday, the premium on mortgage interest rates remains.

The rise in the cost of mortgage payments is a bitter shock to many East Cambridgeshire residents, already facing rising costs from the cost of living crisis. It is also a significant concern for commercial property development companies with the implications from slowing sales and the downward pressure on new property prices.

What actions have been taken to analyse the increased risks to East Cambs Trading Company business plan from the government’s economic mismanagement? What are the risks to East Cambs council taxpayers should ECTC now fail to deliver on its business plan?”

Response from the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee, Cllr David Brown:

“ECTC is responsible for managing the increased risk. The Cost of Living is a risk identified in its risk register.

The Property element of the Business Plan for 2022/23 focuses on completing the sites at Ely and Haddenham and progressing plans to build out the former Paradise Pools site and MOD Phase 2.

Completing the sites in Ely and Haddenham:

Completion of these sites is closely monitored by the ECTC Management Team. All remaining properties are now being marketed for sale. Two houses have sold, with mortgage offers in place, in the past week.

Progressing plans to commence new sites:

The ECTC Director Property & Commercial is working with the ECTC Finance Manager to develop the full business case to progress the Former Paradise Pools site. The business case will include sensitivity analysis that will factor various risks, including the impact of increased mortgage rates.

The same approach will be taken at the appropriate time for MOD Phase 2.

The ECTC Board will make the decision as to whether to progress a site if and when it is satisfied that a robust business case is in place.

The Council's MTFS doesn't assume any dividends from ECTC. The Council has security in the form of a debenture over all of ECTC's unsecured assets. In the unlikely event that ECTC defaults on its loan, which is due for repayment in March 2026, the Council can exercise its rights under the debenture."

v) Question to the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group from Cllr Anna Bailey:

"Does the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group support the introduction of a Congestion Charge for Cambridge? Yes or No?"

Response from the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Cllr Lorna Dupré:

"To be clear, I support the provision of reliable, convenient, affordable, and attractive public transport that meets the needs of local residents and helps reduce congestion and carbon emissions. I support the provision of services that enable residents who cannot drive, or cannot afford to buy and insure a car, to access education, employment, health care, leisure and more.

Recent data shows that Cambridge is the most congested UK city outside London; and indeed the forty-sixth most congested city in the world.

The recent actions by Stagecoach, and the resulting losses of service, are the clearest possible evidence that we need root and branch reform of the way public transport outside London is delivered. The deregulation of public transport by Margaret Thatcher in 1985 was an unmitigated disaster and has led to the situation whereby commercial operators can cherry-pick routes that profit their shareholders and abandon the rest.

I would very much welcome a move towards franchising of bus services, ensuring unprofitable but socially necessary routes continue to be delivered alongside those that can run profitably without public subsidy.

For this to happen, a source of sufficient, reliable, and regular funding needs to be found. The options for this are, to say the least, constrained.

Earlier this year the Government rejected a bus improvement funding bid from the Combined Authority. A report to the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee earlier this week from Conservative county councillor Anne Hay of Chatteris said that two causes of this rejection had been discovered. The first was that the Department for Transport had applied a deprivation score, which did not help our cause as a high growth area. The second was the Government's view that the application had shown insufficient commitment to bus priority schemes, active travel and—interestingly—road charging.

Meanwhile the current Chancellor of the Exchequer is looking for £60 billion of cuts to clear up the previous Chancellor's mess—a package which will make austerity under George Osborne look like a Roman emperor's banquet.

Without Government support, it is unclear how the increases in public transport we need will be funded other than locally. And without attractive public transport options, it is unclear how traffic congestion and carbon emissions will be tackled.

The proposal from the Greater Cambridge Partnership is currently out to public consultation. I would strongly encourage residents in East Cambridgeshire to read the consultation materials, attend the drop-in at Ely Library on the morning of Saturday 29 October, consider what the proposals mean for them, and respond by the deadline of 23 December.”

vi) Question to Cllr Charlotte Cane from Cllr Alec Jones:

“At full Council on 14th July, it was suggested that the Lib Dem Group should seek advice from Councillor Cane about possible uses of the site of the previous Mepal Outdoor Centre. Could Councillor Cane please explain why she has not provided such advice?”

Response from Cllr Cane:

“Thank you Cllr Jones for your question.

I remind Council that I have declared an interest in the plans for a crematorium. I am answering this question because it has no bearing on the decisions Council may make. I am reading the answer so as not to stray into the debate.

I had frequently asked questions about Mepal Outdoor Centre at Finance & Assets Committee, most notably on 20 June 2020 when I sought to have a report brought to the Committee on 23 July 2020 and was told that the Officer was too busy to prepare such a report for that meeting, not least because they were focussed on Covid-19.

Just a few weeks later at a Special Meeting of the Council on 31 July 2020 members were informed of the plans for a Crematorium and Pet Cemetery on the site. A project on which expenditure started in 2018/19. Nobody from the administration corrected the misleading statement given to me by the Officer on 20 June 2020, even though the Officer, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council must have known it was untrue and I assume the Chair of Finance would have known also, as significant funds were already being spent on the project.

Once I knew the Council's plans for the site, I decided I had to declare an interest.

I have asked the Planning Department what advice the organisation for which I work has given. There were 2 emails on the planning portal and one which was not on the portal because it was marked 'sensitive'. I cannot see the advice to which Cllr Bailey refers – I think she may be thinking of the Ecological Assessment Report written by Syntegra Consulting. This report was commissioned by the Council, as the applicant for the crematorium.

The ECDC Planning department has explained to me that the organisation for which I work does not provide statutory advice, as asserted by Cllr Bailey. They provide advice to the Council under a Service Level Agreement because the Council do not have an ecologist within the Council.

This organisation is not 'my organisation', as asserted by Cllr Bailey. It is a registered charity which belongs to its members, who elect Trustees to run the organisation on their behalf. Those Trustees employ staff to carry out the day-to-day activities – I am one of those employees.

It would seem that Cllr Bailey was being disingenuous in both her words and deeds and was apparently more interested in political point scoring than facts.

Having declared an interest in the matter, I have taken no part in discussions of the plans at Council or its Committees. As I hope all members understand, if a member has declared an interest, they should not take part in any discussions of the matter with fellow Councillors. I must say, I am rather surprised that Cllr Bailey, as Leader of the Council which is the applicant for planning permission for this site, felt able to speak so forthrightly about the uses of the site just weeks before it came to this Council's Planning Committee for consideration.

In summary, the reasons I have not shared the advice with the Lib Dem Group are:

1. It would be improper to take part in the discussions; and even if it was proper to share it
2. I have seen no evidence that the organisation for which I work has given the advice which Cllr Bailey claims and I have asked the Planning Department to provide me with all the advice which that organisation has given to the Planning Department.”