



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

Minutes of the Meeting of East Cambridgeshire
District Council held in the Council Chamber,
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday
12 July 2018 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Cresswell (Chairman)	
Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith	Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor David Ambrose Smith	Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor David Brown	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Paul Cox	Councillor Dan Schumann
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Mark Goldsack	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Coralie Green	Councillor Christine Whelan

21. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were submitted.

22. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allan, Austen, Beckett, Bradley, Cheetham, Hitchin, Huffer, Morris, Sennitt and Shuter.

23. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Anna Bailey and Charles Roberts both declared an interest in Agenda Item 9, as both were Directors of the East Cambs Trading Company.

24. **MINUTES**

Councillor Anna Bailey pointed out that, with regard to the Annual meeting of 24th May, minute number 16, page 6, second paragraph needed to be re-worded as the Soham Mill and Viva projects were the same. Therefore the relevant sentence should read "The Soham Mill was a very exciting project and Viva was well known for its outstanding work in the community, particularly with young people." This amendment was agreed.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of Annual Council meeting held on 24 May 2018, as amended, and the Extraordinary meeting on the same day be confirmed as correct records and be signed by the Chairman.

25. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Local Business Visits

The Chairman had organised a series of visits to local businesses, which had been well received and appreciated by all concerned. These would continue in the autumn with the next one being on Wednesday 26th September.

Previous visits had all been on Friday mornings, but some Members had found that morning of the week inconvenient. Therefore it had been decided to change the day of the week on this occasion, in anticipation that it would be more suitable. Details of the visit on 26th September would be emailed to Members by the Business Development Team in due course.

Chairman's Civic Service

It would take place this year on Sunday 21st October at St George's Church in Littleport, commencing at 3:00pm. Having held the Chairman's Reception in the south of the district and last year's Civic Service in Soham, it was time the Council held a civic event in Littleport. Invitations would be sent out in early September and the Chairman asked for Members' support.

End of World War I Commemoration

On Sunday 11th November this year the nation would be commemorating the end of World War I. Beacons would be lit throughout the land at 7:00pm that evening and church bells would be rung at 7:05pm to signify peace. Members were asked to ascertain whether the parishes they represented would be taking part in this commemoration. The Diocese had communicated with local churches regarding the ringing of bells but the Chairman wished to see as many beacons as possible lit throughout the district. The Chairman would be happy to co-ordinate the arrangements in East Cambridgeshire and people should feel free to give out the Chairman's contact details, so they could be registered with the National Pageantmaster.

26. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

27. **MOTIONS**

No Motions were received.

28. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

No questions from Members were received.

Councillors Bailey and Roberts left the meeting at this point.

29. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

Council considered a report T46, previously circulated, that gave details of recommendations from the Council's committees.

Resources and Finance Committee, 18 June 2018 - 2017/18 Treasury Operations Annual Performance Review

The Chairman considered this good news, as it highlighted the interest the Council had gained, greater than expected, during the last year.

It was resolved:

That the report on the Council's treasury operations during 2017-18, including the prudential and treasury indicators as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

Shareholder Committee, 28 June 2018 - Future Role of the Shareholder Committee

Councillor Dupré noted that there were three recommendations to consider. The first two related to reducing the Shareholder Committee's influence. This meant that the Council would have no right to consider a whole raft of issues, such as the business dividend, bonuses, shares, the Companies entering contracts or loans. The Committee could approve the Companies' business plan but not any amendments to it. These changes reduced the remit of the Committee and would not allow any reviews of the Companies' structures and have no management of their accounts.

The Committee had already been emasculated as two meetings had already been cancelled, just when the Trading Company had a £40 million loan bid drawn up. Members of the Committee were supposed to have been provided with Board papers but had received none so the Shareholder Agreement had already been breached.

The objective of the Committee was to scrutinise but the Memorandum of Understanding, presented as the Modus Operandi, was in fact neither. It did not set out how the Committee was supposed to operate. It was expected that the Committee would act as the Companies' 'cheer leaders'.

These recommendations should be rejected, as the duty of a District Councillor was not to the Companies or the Council but to the taxpayer and to scrutinise matters as the Council's Constitution required.

Councillor Alan Sharp acknowledged that in accordance with the Constitution the Committee had to scrutinise and, although not mentioned in the Memorandum, this was its aim. The words 'critical friend' had been used, which meant that awkward questions could be asked to obtain the right answers. The Shareholder Committee was there to protect the Council and to question the Companies. Reports in terms of summary would be provided but the Committee could dig deeper if it wanted to. The Committee would see the quarterly financial and business plan reports but would not want to become bogged down in detail, as it should look at the strategic view. The proposed changes were a move in the right direction.

In response to Councillor David Brown's questions, the Legal Services Manager confirmed that the Memorandum would be added to the Council's Constitution and that the remit of the Committee was to scrutinise the Council's trading companies.

Upon being put to the vote,

It was resolved:

That, as amended in consultation with the Chairman of the Shareholder Committee:

- (i) The revision to the terms of reference of the Shareholder Committee detailed in Appendix 1 be agreed;
- (ii) The revisions to the Shareholder Agreements detailed in Appendix 2 be agreed;
- (iii) The 'modus operandi' detailed in Appendix 3 be agreed.

Councillors Bailey and Roberts returned to the meeting at this point.

30. **END OF YEAR COUNCIL REPORT 2017-2018**

Council considered a report, T47, previously circulated, that detailed the Council's End of Year report for 2017/18.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Charles Roberts, thought that Members and staff should be proud of the Annual Report, as it demonstrated

that this Council was one of the best, efficient councils in the country and was the envy of others. Other councils looked to this Council, asking about its 'open for business' philosophy. Its achievements had not been by accident but through having a clear vision, being objective and its steely determination. This had not just been achieved by Members but by the Directors and Council staff. This had been done by being a joined up team, so thanks were given to Members and officers.

The Council had not finished and already had clear plans for the future including keeping finances tight, maintaining free parking and providing more affordable housing. The latter would be aided by the £6.5 million obtained for the Community Land Trust development in Haddenham as well as a £40 million loan from the Combined Authority. Other plans included improving transport and reviewing the waste service. There were exciting challenges ahead.

Councillor Bill Hunt thanked the Chief Executive and his team for producing an excellent report. The report reflected the good business management of the Council achieved by the excellent officers. The report was not just an information document but also provided a record of success. All Members should take this as an example of a well-run Council.

Councillor Lorna Dupré noted the report talked of infrastructure improvements but bus services had not been mentioned and this Council was not responsible for roads either. It was pointed out that recycling rates were down and that had not been included. There were no figures for the numbers of affordable housing provided. The Barton Road site was due to provide three, but only two would be on that site so where was the third going to be? There had also been no mention of the North Ely developments. The Council was reminded that a Planning Inspector had stated that the Council had an under-provision of affordable housing. Building of homes in rural areas was being encouraged, while 30% of them should be affordable.

Also missing from the report was information about figures for apprenticeships or a report on the Council's gender pay gap. As the report stated the Council had over 200 staff there was an obligation to publish that information. The 'purge on plastics' was also absent, nor was an update on the development of the Council building or its re-location. Therefore the report was not inspiring.

Councillor Christine Whelan thought it offensive that the report blamed people for suffering illness. Many residents suffered through no fault of their own. The wording of the first section of the report, relating to a £1.3 million cost, could have been more positive. With regard to commerce and tourism, the markets were now being run by the East Cambs Trading Company and the report failed to say tourism was now the responsibility of Ely City Council. This report could not be endorsed.

Councillor Mark Hugo, as Chairman of one of the Community Land Trusts (CLTs), stated that it had delivered 35% affordable housing. So it

appeared that Councillor Dupré had not understood the situation. These developments were for people who lived and worked in the community. CLTs were different to commercial developments and should be extended.

Councillor Peter Cresswell queried the number of staff employed by the Council. The Chief Executive explained that the Regulatory Services Committee had been advised of the statutory requirements but had gone beyond that to provide additional non-statutory information. The numbers were changing all the time so the Chief Executive would be happy to clarify those numbers.

Councillor Anna Bailey acknowledged that the report had not included everything, as that would have resulted in a very large document. Recycling rates had reduced but there were specific reasons for that, partly due to a technical issue related to the waste disposal plant. The provision of affordable homes in the North Ely development would be dependent on their viability but the Council would put up a robust defence in an attempt to achieve the right numbers. The 'purge on plastics' initiative had only recently been agreed but plans were being prepared to take action on that.

There was some sympathy about the £1.3 million statement and there was an opportunity to be more positive about it, so a view would be taken on re-wording that.

The cost of producing the report, which would be delivered to every household in the district, would be 26 pence per household. It would be right to inform the residents how the Council had done. Thanks were offered to the Management Team and the Reprographics department for producing the report.

Housing had received a fair amount of attention in the report, as it was a hot topic. As more housing was needed this was something the Council had to focus on. The Council had been doing the difficult things to stop people losing their homes through work by its Housing team. This had resulted in the housing register becoming freed up for the first time. New community hubs had also been opened and work was ongoing with local residents to deliver CLTs. These were community led and gave huge benefits to local communities, which the communities themselves chose. CLTs could increase the numbers of affordable housing and the CLTs would choose where, when and how they would be delivered. The Council's East Cambs Trading Company had provided such houses across the district with a planning application for 115 affordable houses at the Kennett site. This would be achieved through a secured loan, which would be paid in full with interest within 2 years, allowing the Combined Authority to re-use that money. The Combined Authority had also moved forward with a further £40 million loan to help build 550 Community Land Trust homes across the district.

A lot of new infrastructure had been delivered and there would be a focus on delivering more through a host of new projects. There had been a smooth

hand over of the waste service, though the Council had inherited a mess. This would improve and the new work force would be shown it was valued. The new waste service had already cleared 40 tons of fly-tips. Although Ely City Council had taken over tourism, this Council would approach tourism from a district-wide basis. Thanks were given to all the staff for being so efficient and innovative.

When put to the vote,

It was resolved:

That the progress made against the Corporate Priorities of the Council as detailed within the End of Year Council report 2017-2018 be noted.

31. **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Council considered a report, T48 previously circulated, detailed a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

The Strategic Planning Manager advised the Council a second version of the new SCI had been tabled, which highlighted the changes from the old version from 2015. Every Council had a legal requirement for a SCI and this set out how the Council would consult stakeholders on planning matters and explained how the public could get involved. The new SCI was similar to the previous version of 2015 but had a new section covering Neighbourhood Planning which included how the Council would assist parish councils. So the new SCI was essentially a refresh and an update.

Councillor Lorna Dupré thanked the officer for circulating the second version highlighting the amendments. With reference to Enforcement, who made the decisions? It was noted that the public had the right to speak on planning applications so this needed to be highlighted more.

Councillor Lis Every joined the meeting at this point.

It was resolved:

That an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), as attached at Appendix A, be adopted.

32. **POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS REVIEW AND COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Council considered a report, T49 previously circulated, that set out the outcome of the Reviews.

The Chairman advised the Council that a revised recommendation had been tabled and circulated.

The Electoral Services Team Leader advised the Council that permission was being sought to agree to the final recommendations.

Councillor Anna Bailey thanked the officer for her hard work and stated that Mepal Parish Council would be very pleased with the outcome.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Returning Officer's recommendations contained in the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review (PDR) as set out in Appendix A be approved.
- (ii) That the final recommendations as set out in Appendix B, and making and publishing of the Community Governance Reorganisation Order 2018 be approved.

33. **RESOLUTION TO EXTEND 6 MONTH RULE – SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Council considered a report, T50 previously circulated, requesting an extension of the 6 month rule for Councillor Sue Austen, having regard for her absence from meetings.

The Chairman was happy to propose agreement to the recommendations and this was seconded by the Liberal Democrat Group Leader.

Councillor Anna Bailey sent her very best wishes to Councillor Austen for a full recovery. Her past attendance record had been very good and had only been interrupted by her ill health.

It was resolved:

That an extension of the 6 month rule for Councillor Sue Austen, on ill health grounds, for an additional 6 month period until the 22 February 2019 be approved and Council's best wishes be expressed to her for a speedy recovery.

34. **COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORT**

The reports were received.

The meeting concluded at 6:54pm.