

Date of Publication of Decision List: 24 October 2023

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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

COUNCIL – 19 OCTOBER 2023 – DECISION LIST

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	One public question was received and responded to as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
2.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members.	No apologies for absence were received from Councillors.	-
3.	-	Declarations of Interests	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 interests were made by Members.	-
4.	-	Minutes – 13 July 2023	To receive the Minutes of the last Council meeting.	It was resolved: That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.	Democratic Services Manager
5.	-	Chairman's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	The Chairman made the following announcements: 1. Jane Webb For those of you who have not met her yet, I would like to introduce our new Senior Democratic Services Officer, Jane Webb. Some of you may recognise Jane from her similar role on the Police and Crime Panel. 2. Independent Remuneration Panel As you will be aware, the Independent Remuneration Panel comprising 4 Lay Members of the public, has commenced a review of Members Allowances and is	-

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				<p>due to report its recommendations to the full Council meeting in February 2024 to enable any changes to take effect from 1 April 2024.</p> <p>To enable them to conduct their review effectively, the IRP has sent out a Questionnaire on how much time, on average, Councillors spend on Council business and to get your thoughts on the allowances received. Please could you complete the questionnaire as fully as possible, or alternatively you can make a written submission to the IRP. These should be sent to Tracy Couper in Democratic Services or to the IRP Chairman, Richard Tyler. Paper copies of the Questionnaire are available from Tracy to take away this evening.</p>	
6.	-	To Receive Petitions	To receive public petitions.	No public petitions had been received.	-
7.	-	Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10	<p>To receive and consider the received Motion:</p> <p>I. Road Charging ‘That this Council does not support road charging anywhere in Cambridgeshire.’ Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey Seconder: Cllr Alan Sharp</p> <p>II. Four Day Working Week ‘That this Council does not support the introduction of a four-day working week.’ Proposer: Cllr Sharp Seconder: Cllr Vellacott</p>	<p>Motion carried.</p> <p>Motion carried.</p>	<p>Director Community</p> <p>HR Manager</p>

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8.	-	To answer Questions from Members	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Five questions from Members were received and responses given as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
9.	Y69	Recommendations from Committees and other Member Bodies	To consider and take decisions on items recommended from Committees and other Member Bodies.	<p>Finance & Assets Committee – 28 September 2023</p> <p><u>a) Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) Review 2024/25</u></p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>That the Local Council Reduction Scheme remain unchanged (i.e. the maximum reduction for a working age claimant remains at 91.5%) for the 2024/25 financial year.</p>	Director Finance

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10.	Y70	East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Single Issue Review – For Adoption	To consider the Inspector’s Report into the Single Issue Review of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, and determine whether to accept the recommendations of the Inspector, and subsequently adopt the updated East Cambridgeshire Local Plan in accordance with those recommendations.	<p>It was unanimously resolved:</p> <p>A. That Appendix 2a of the submitted report be noted.</p> <p>B. That the Single Issue Review amendments to the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 be adopted with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The changes as were set out in the SIR Consultation Document (May 2022) (Appendix 1), other than those parts superseded by (ii) and (iii) below. ii) The main modifications as recommended by the Inspector in his Inspector’s Report (Appendix 2b); and iii) Other minor editorial modifications (‘Additional Modifications’) (Appendix 3) <p>C. That the Strategic Planning Manager be authorised to incorporate the amendments arising from Recommendation (B) above into an updated Local Plan for publication as soon as possible, with the new Local Plan to be referred to as the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended 2023).</p>	Director Community
11.	Y71	Amendments to Memorandum of Agreement Between ECDC and ECSS	To consider proposed changes to the Memorandum of Agreement between ECDC and ECSS.	<p>It was resolved:</p> <p>1. That the changes to Memorandum of Agreement as detailed in Appendix 1, with the addition of the revised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for ECSS at Appendix 2 be approved.</p>	Director Legal

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				2. That the revised Risk Register entry in relation to ECSS at Appendix 3, be noted.	
12.		Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Update Reports	To receive the reports from the Constituent Council representatives on the Combined Authority: Skills and Employment Committee (3 July 2023) Transport and Infrastructure Committee (12 July 2023) Audit and Governance Committee (7 July 2023) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (24 July 2023) Board (26 July 2023).	It was resolved: That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's representatives be noted.	Democratic Services Manager
13.	Y72	Action Taken on the Grounds of Urgency	To note the action taken on the grounds of urgency in relation to finalisation of the Crematorium full Business Case.	It was resolved: The action taken on the grounds of urgency be noted.	Democratic Services Manager

1. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question from Sarah Hughes, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance:

“This summer the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance spent a day interviewing people waiting for buses at the Market Street stops in Ely, as part of a wider survey of 300+ bus users in Cambridge, Ely, and Huntingdon. We asked people how often and why they travelled by bus, and how the service was working for them.

Our interviews suggest that bus users in Ely rely deeply on the bus service. 84% of those we talked to didn't own or have access to a car, compared to the national average of 22% of households, and a third travelled by bus daily.

40% of bus users in Ely we talked to said that services needed to be more frequent and 25% said services were late or unreliable. And I should note that we only interviewed people waiting for buses, so will not have captured the views of those who cannot travel by bus currently or have given up doing so.

Here's what some people said:

"I'm a Londoner. If you waited 20 mins in London that was a long time. Here it's every 2 hours. Why isn't there a Sunday service?"

"If there's no bus we're stuck at home. Bank holidays we're stuck. Sundays we're stuck. We are older people and have to rely on buses".

"The last bus home to Chatteris is 530pm. Every 2 hours isn't enough... It's 20 quid for a taxi if you miss the last bus".

"We need later services. Teenagers just can't get to anything in Ely".

"Mornings are tricky. We have to get the bus at 7:30am, which arrives in Soham at 8am for a 9am [primary] school start... and it's changing for the worse".

The worst thing about the bus is "panicking it's not going to be there when it's supposed to be".

"It's not enough, but I'm very grateful for what we have".

Across the wider County, the biggest concern was about bus cancellations and delays. Stagecoach East MD Darren Roe has recently spoken out about how congestion in Cambridge, over which the bus companies have no control, causes bus cancellations and delays. Congestion doesn't just impact buses operating in Cambridge city; it also affects all buses that travel to and from the city from other villages, towns, and cities. So, if you try to travel from Ely to Littleport, your bus will often not be on time because it's coming from Cambridge.

So, I come to my question: Where does East Cambridgeshire District Council think that funding for a better bus service will come from? And how does East Cambridgeshire District Council think that reliability for buses in East Cambridgeshire can be improved when congestion is so bad in Cambridge?"

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

“I thank you for your question. The proposals for the Future Bus Network in the Making Connections project by the Greater Cambridge Partnership were woefully inadequate, particularly in the rural areas including East Cambridgeshire. The damage that would have been wrought by the proposed Congestion Charge was simply not worth it. And in the end, it appears that local politicians are in agreement on that, as the plans have been dropped, at least for now.

I agree that something needs to be done to address the issues of congestion, particularly at certain times of the day. However, we do not believe that buses are the answer.

Conservatives want to see a 21st century ‘turn up and go’ mass public transport system, that is so good, so efficient, cheap, easy, and quick that people want to use it because it is better than the car. This could be light rail, or autonomous vehicles, it could include tunnelling under central Cambridge. It could be supplemented by buses and demand responsive transport, particularly in the short term. And it would mean that those that can, will use it instead of their car – because it is better, cheaper, and easier. This would free up road space for buses, and for safer, easier, and pleasanter walking. This is what we need to support the future growth of Greater Cambridge and beyond; it is no less that Cambridgeshire deserves, and we can have it.

And despite the Lib Dems refusing to take road charging off the table at the County Council the other day, and despite them turning down the invitation of the Conservatives to all get round the table and work together, I do believe we can move to a consensus on this...and we must.”

8. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

i) Question to the Leader from Cllr Lucius Vellacott:

“Soham and Wicken High Streets are frequently affected by excessive speeding, as well as illegal parking, so I welcome the introduction of a new enforcement scheme by the Police to address this. Could the Leader of the Council provide the latest update on the scheme’s development?”

Response from the Leader, Cllr Anna Bailey:

“I thank Cllr Vellacott for his question, and I think it is worth just talking about those authorities trying to bring in Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) for a second; even though CPE only deals with the parking issue, not speeding. Costs are escalating in those authorities trying to introduce CPE with Fenland facing an up-front bill of nearly £1m and Fenland is also being told it will have to take on the maintenance responsibility of lineage and signage.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has agreed to the introduction of parking charges on the streets of the villages of South Cambridgeshire once the money from the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership runs out. I am certain the population of the leafy South Cambridgeshire villages are blissfully unaware of this. I will not sign up this authority to such levels of expenditure for things that are not even our responsibility and that are irreversible; this Council will not put our free parking at risk with the introduction of CPE.

However, there is a problem across our district with our police resources stretched and in October 2022, we put an innovative solution to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, which they have taken time to carefully consider I and am now pleased to give an update on the alternative proposal we put to Cambridgeshire Police. I met with Supt James Sutherland yesterday and the proposals for the introduction of the Road Safety Volunteer roles are going for sign off to their November Change Board. Just a reminder that this is about a wider road safety remit; these roles will be able to capture evidence that would lead to speeding fines, as well as playing an education role talking to people at school gates, which are a point of contention with regard to a road safety issue. There is a lot more involved than just car parking and the proposals have been adapted to speed up implementation; there are a large number of Special Constables in the Cambridgeshire force that are non-active, or older, or not so engaged. The new model proposes to recruit them to the project, they are already trained in elements such as conflict de-escalation and have all the powers of a Police Constable, so will not require the use of S38 to carry out the role. The intention is to build this Special Constable team that will then be able to oversee and support the new Road Safety Police Volunteers which will use S38 to carry out their work. We look forward to the result of their Change Board meeting in November and Supt James Sutherland was optimistic about a speedy rollout. I hope we will start to see car parking as well as road safety being addressed and tackled across our district.”

ii) Question to the Chair of Operational Services Committee from Cllr Christine Colbert:

“What plans does this Council have to enter into the Business Waste market?”

Response from the Chair of Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer:

“Thank you, Cllr Colbert, for your question. Operational Services Committee approved the ECSS Business Plan in March 2023 which included a commercially minded work stream. ECSS is currently focussed on delivering a service for the Council and meeting the key performance indicators in the Business Plan.”

iii) Question to the Chair of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer from Cllr Christine Whelan:

“At the current time there are many houses that are run by Sanctuary housing, some that are empty and have been for over a year. Will Cllr Huffer invite Sanctuary Housing to a meeting of Operational Services Committee to answer questions from members regarding the empty housing they have in the district?”

Response from the Chair of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer:

“Thank you, Councillor Whelan, for your question. Like you, I am also concerned about the number of empty properties Sanctuary Housing have in the district. The Leadership have already instructed Senior Officers to work with Sanctuary Housing to get more information that would enable us to better understand why these properties are empty, for how long they have been empty and what is Sanctuary’s action plan for dealing with the issue. However, I do not believe that Operational Services Committee is the right platform to engage with Sanctuary so I am going to ask officers to arrange a Member Seminar so that all Members will have the opportunity to ask their questions to Sanctuary, as this is a district wide issue.”

iv) Question to the Chair of Operational Services Committee on ECSS governance from Cllr Mark Inskip:

“At the full Council meeting on 21 February a member expressed concern about the proper governance of the East Cambs Street Scene should the Council’s Director Operations also be an ECSS Director. Explaining that in effect this would mean that the Council Officer responsible for monitoring the delivery of the company’s improvement plan would also be a Company Director.

Cllr Huffer told the Council on 21 February that she had “no such reservations” about the proposed appointment of the Director of Operations as an ECSS Director.

On 29 September the Chief Executive briefed members that “to provide greater separation and clarity between the roles and responsibilities of the Council and ECSS, particularly at senior management level... [the] Director, Operations will... resign from the ECSS Board”.

Has Cllr Huffer had opportunity to reflect on her earlier statement?”

Response from the Chair of Operational Services committee on ECSS governance, Cllr Julia Huffer:

“The Chief Executive has undertaken a full review of ECSS and I fully support his decision on senior management changes.

v) Question from Councillor Charlotte Cane to Leader of the Council:

Cllr Bailey told Council on 21 February that "She disagreed with the assertions of poor governance [at ECSS]"

On 29 September the Chief Executive briefed Members that "there are governance failures..."

Has Cllr Bailey had opportunity to reflect on her earlier statement?

Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:

“Thank you for the question, Cllr Cane. Members are clearly aware that the Chief Executive has undertaken a review of ECSS as instructed by the Audit Committee, whose conclusions we fully support, unlike the opposition who voted against his recommendations.