

AGENDA ITEM 11 – Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10

ALTERED MOTION (15/05/205)

Councillors' Role in Planning Applications

East Cambridgeshire District Council, hereinafter referred to as the 'Council', notes that:

- The Deputy Prime Minister has published a planning and infrastructure bill designed to liberalise planning rules
- The Local Government Association has written to ministers to express its reservations about this plan
- This Council has a commitment under its Corporate Plan to support community-led, affordable and sustainable development, with investment in infrastructure

The Council believes that:

- Whilst the Council places on record its admiration for the high-quality work of its planning officers, it is additionally the democratic role of locally elected councillors to be involved in the decision-making process of selected planning applications which affect their residents' lives and land
- Such applications are not necessarily restricted to large or non-routine applications
- This plan could represent a further setback to community-led development
- Removing the ability for councillors to choose to debate and vote on specific developments in their localities could erode public trust in the planning system and local government more generally
- Regional Mayors will soon be responsible for strategic planning and will be given new powers to "call in" applications for decision
- Local Planning Authorities will be significantly larger and more remote from local communities after Local Government Reorganisation
- Ministers lack the level of localised information which councils and councillors have as to which decisions should be made by officers and which by councillors
- These measures represent an erosion of local democracy and accountability

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to MHCLG and Charlotte Cane MP, outlining this Council's opposition to the proposals and inviting them to work with the Council to find appropriate solutions
- Instruct the Operational Services Committee, in consultation with relevant officers, to do all it can to ensure that robust mechanisms continue to exist for Councillors both to express views on and to determine planning applications related to their ward, in anticipation of the Bill becoming law
- Continue to encourage and ~~financially support~~ provide advice and assistance to its parishes in the preparation and completion of local Neighbourhood Plans over the next three years, including those which are beginning the process of creating one, such as Wicken Parish Council

Proposer: Cllr Lucius Vellacott (Soham South and Wicken – Conservative)

Seconder: Cllr Bill Hunt (Stretham – Conservative)