

East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Annual Council

22 May 2025

**Agenda
Minutes and Recommendations**

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO THE GRANGE

Parking

Limited visitor parking is available during the daytime at the access area to The Grange, for people making short visits on Council business of up to 30 minutes. Ample free public car parking is available nearby for longer visits and location plans can be forwarded on request. On-site car parking is available for evening meetings after 5.00pm.

Access and Security

If you are visiting The Grange during normal office hours you should report to the main reception desk, where you will be asked to fill in a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times whilst you are in the building. Please remember to return your pass before you leave.

This will not apply if you come to an evening meeting: in this case you will enter via the rear access doors in the glass atrium at the back of the building and a Facilities Assistant will direct you to the room in which the meeting will take place.

Emergencies

In the event of a fire or any other emergency during the day, you will hear a continuous alarm. The designated officer or their deputy as set out in the displayed plans for each floor will take charge of any evacuation and try to ensure that no one is left within the areas for which they are responsible.

You should leave the building by the nearest available exit and go to the assembly point near to the exit barrier in the front car park. **Do not** use the lifts, and **do not** re-enter the building until someone advises that it is safe for you to do so.

If you discover a fire immediately operate the nearest fire alarm call point, inform reception or another member of staff, leave the building and go to the assembly point.

In the event of a fire or another emergency during an evening meeting, a member of staff will direct you to the nearest available exit.

First Aid

If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please let a member of staff know.

Access for People with Disabilities

The Council Chamber and majority of Committee rooms are accessible to wheelchair users via the lift. There are specially adapted toilets on the ground floor (in main reception) and on the first floor of the building.

In the event of a fire or another emergency, wheelchair users will be guided to an area near to an exit to await the arrival of the emergency services.

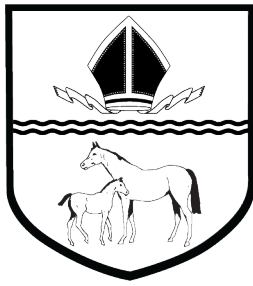
Toilets

Public toilets are on the ground floor in the main reception area.

If you are visiting The Grange for an evening meeting, the toilets in close proximity to the Chamber and Committee rooms are all clearly signposted.

Smoking

The Council operates a NO SMOKING policy in all its office buildings, including the car park to The Grange.



East Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held on **THURSDAY 22 MAY 2025** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE GRANGE, NUTHOLT LANE, ELY, CB7 4EE**, commencing at **6:00pm** with up to 15 minutes of Public Question Time, immediately followed by the formal business, and you are summoned to attend for the transaction of the following business

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, prayers will be delivered by Reverend Eleanor Whalley from Soham Parish Church

A minute's silence will be observed as a mark of respect following the death of former Councillor Bill Pickess, District Councillor for the Ely South Ward from 2003 to 2007

Agenda

- 1. Public Question Time** **[oral]**
The meeting will commence with up to 15 minutes Public Question Time (PQT) – questions/statements can be submitted in advance or placed in the PQT box in the Council Chamber prior to the commencement of the meeting – see Notes below for further information on the PQT scheme.
- 2. Apologies for Absence** **[oral]**
- 3. Election of Chair 2025/26** **[oral]**

Nomination Cllr Kelli Pettitt Cllr Christine Whelan	Proposed by Cllr Anna Bailey Cllr Ross Trent	Seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer Cllr Christine Colbert
--	---	---
- 4. Vote of Thanks to Outgoing Chair and Presentation of Past Chair's Medallion and Scroll** **[oral]**
- 5. Election of Vice-Chair 2025/26** **[oral]**

Nomination Cllr Keith Horgan Cllr Gareth Wilson	Proposed by Cllr Anna Bailey Cllr Christine Whelan	Seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer Cllr Christine Colbert
--	---	---

- 6. Declarations of Interests** **[oral]**
To receive declarations of interests from Members for any items on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.
- 7. Minutes – 25 February 2025 & 20 March 2025** **Page 1 & 14**
To confirm as a correct record.
- 8. Stretham Ward District By-Election Result** **[oral]**
To note the election of Councillor Lee Denney as a District Councillor for the Stretham Ward.
- 9. Chair’s Announcements** **[oral]**
- 10. To receive Petition(s) (If any)** **[oral]**
- 11. Notice of Motions under Procedure Rule 10** **[oral]**

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 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

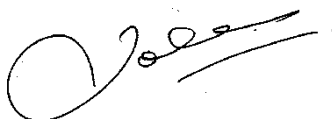
12. **To answer questions from Members (If any)** **[oral]**
13. **Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders** **Page 18**
14. **Political Proportionality** **Page 19**
15. **Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees (including Substitutes) and Other Member Bodies 2025/26** **Page 23**
16. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for all Committees and Sub-Committees 2025/26:** **[oral]**
 - Finance and Assets Committee
 - Operational Services Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Licensing Committee
 - Planning Committee
 - Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee
 - F&A (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee
 - Licensing Sub-Committee (Statutory)
 - Licensing Sub-Committee (Non-Statutory)
17. **Schedule of items recommended from Committees and other Member bodies:**
 - Audit Committee – 15 April 2025
 - **Audit Committee Annual Report** **Page 30**
18. **Bereavement Centre Budget** **Page 38**
Exempt appendices (Pages 61-65 Exempt Pack)
19. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority:**
 - (a) **Appointments to Combined Authority** **Page 46**
 - (b) **Update report – February & March 2025** **Page 52**
20. **Actions taken on the grounds of urgency – Wentworth Parish Council – Council Tax** **Page 54**

Exclusion of the Public including representatives of the Press

That the Press and Public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

21. Exempt - Partnership working through Section 113 Agreement

Exempt Report (Page 66 Exempt Pack)



J Hill
Chief Executive

To: All Members of the Council

NOTES:

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. Admittance is on a "first come, first served" basis and public access will be from 30 minutes before the start time of the meeting. Due to room capacity restrictions, members of the public are asked, where possible, to notify Democratic Services (democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk or 01353 665555) of their intention to attend a meeting.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream of the meeting will be available. Further details can be found at <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/node/1406> Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the livestream.

Public Questions/Statements are welcomed on any topic related to the Council's functions as long as there is no suspicion that it is improper (e.g. offensive, slanderous or might lead to disclosures of Exempt or Confidential information). Up to 15 minutes is allocated for this at the start of the meeting. Further details about the Public Question Time scheme are available at: <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/committees/public-question-time-scheme>

The Council has adopted a 'Purge on Plastics' strategy and is working towards the removal of all consumer single-use plastics in our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups at our meetings and would ask members of the public to bring their own drink to the meeting, if required.

Fire instructions for meeting: The instructions in the event of a fire at the venue will be announced at the commencement of the meeting.

Reports are attached for each agenda item unless marked "oral".

If required, all items on the agenda can be provided in different formats (e.g. large type, Braille or audio tape, or translated into other languages), on request, by calling Main Reception on (01353) 665555 or e-mail: translate@eastcambs.gov.uk

If the Committee wishes to exclude the public and press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be passed:

“That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no(s). X because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category X of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council
held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE
on Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 6.00pm

Present

Councillor Chika Akinwale	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith	Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor David Miller
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Kelli Pettitt
Councillor David Brown (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Charlotte Cane	Councillor Caroline Shepherd
Councillor Christine Colbert	Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Ross Trent
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Lucius Vellacott
Councillor Mark Goldsack (Chair)	Councillor Mary Wade
Councillor Martin Goodearl	Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Kathrin Holtzmann	Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Keith Horgan	Councillor Gareth Wilson
Councillor Julia Huffer	

51. Public Question Time

Question from Ted Coney, Babylon Arts Trustee

"As you are going to be asked to vote on an amendment to the budget by the Lib/Dem and Independent group on money for Arts and Tourism, I understand this is in particular reference to Babylon Arts of which I am a trustee. Have your leaders sent you a link to our Business Plan? I think it is very important that you know what a great loss Babylon Gallery will be to the city and wider area if it is forced to close because of lack of funding.

"I was present as a trustee some 12 years ago when the councillors took our core funding away and have seen at first hand how difficult it has been to rely on just grants for particular projects and donations to keep going.

"I very much hope that this time you can work together to restore some core funding so that we can carry on our vital work."

Question from Peter Harvey (read out by the Chair)

"Given the council is committed to retaining community facilities, including cultural facilities:

- What is the council doing to support or facilitate Babylon ARTS in its quest for revenue funding to enable it to survive, given its loss could have an adverse effect on the local community?
- Who is the ECDC lead member and/or officer, for arts development?
- What is ECDC policy on arts development in the district?"

Response from the Leader, Cllr Bailey to both questions:

"Thank you both for your questions. As a past Trustee of Babylon Arts, I recognise the hugely valued role that it plays in the community and I thank the volunteers for all their work over the years. In particular, the Babylon Gallery is an important part of Ely's vibrant culture and definitely adds to the city's tourism industry. I know that you get significant numbers through the gallery every year and importantly it also gives Babylon Arts a place from which to operate. I have met with representatives from Babylon Arts and recognise its reliance on individual grant funding, which is always going to be a 'hand to mouth' form of operating. I support moves to ensure that it establishes a more sustainable operating model, which seeks to reduce its reliance on grant funding in the future. To specifically answer your question, as to whether the business plan has been circulated to councillors, this was not an item on our agenda this evening and so I do not believe it has been circulated, but it certainly can be.

"I just want to quickly provide a bit of history. Back in 2013, the City of Ely Council took over responsibility for supporting Babylon Arts from the District Council, as part of a wider programme involving the transfer of assets and responsibilities. The Maltings building was also transferred. In 2017, the City of Ely Council also took over responsibility for tourism specific to Ely. I congratulate them for the great job that they have done, we have a really vibrant scene in Ely. Until recently, the City of Ely had provided support to Babylon through the free use of the Maltings to run its cinema. I understand the Babylon have stopped running the cinema and the City of Ely Council are now in the process of trying to establish a community cinema. We wish them luck with that. The District Council's role in supporting the arts is to provide capital grants to support community facilities across the district and notably this has recently included the Viva community theatre in Soham, which is thriving. Additionally, other investments in community facilities and buildings have been made all over the district.

"I met with the City of Ely Council last week, to discuss a request from them about assets in Ely that were still in the freehold ownership of the District Council and the funding of Babylon Arts was also discussed. It was clear that neither council wanted to see the loss of the Babylon Gallery, why adds so much to making Ely such a lovely place. We do need a little more time and a little more information before we can progress these discussions. Any proposals will be subject to detailed consideration and approval of our respective committees. I have been keeping the Chair of Babylon updated on these developments, so that she can do what she needs to do to progress matters. I understand that last night the City of Ely Council agreed to refer a decision back to its committee to reconsider the situation. This will provide more time for both councils to liaise with Babylon Arts to better understand the financial position and ensure that a more informed decision is made. I hope that it is a positive decision."

Supplementary Question from Ted Coney, Babylon Arts Trustee

“As a Trustee I was not aware that the City of Ely Council had given anything to Babylon, although we are grateful to them for not charging us for using the Maltings for the cinema, but this was not a favour for Babylon, it was a favour to the people of Ely, so that they could enjoy that facility.

“I do not believe that the City of Ely councillors have seen the Babylon business plan and so this had now been provided to the clerk. I ask that the business plan is circulated to all district councillors, as we are fighting for something that is really vital and unless everyone is informed, I do not think that we stand a fair chance.”

Response from the Leader, Cllr Bailey:

“I will ensure that the business plan is circulated to all district councillors, but I cannot speak for the City of Ely.”

52. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr James Lay.

53. Declarations of Interest

The Democratic Services and Elections Manager explained that regarding agenda item 13, Council Tax, councillors were advised that whilst being a council taxpayer was a pecuniary interest, it was not a disclosable pecuniary interest, and they did not need to apply for a dispensation to participate in the debate or vote.

Cllr Gareth Wilson declared a personal interest in agenda item 12, East Cambridgeshire Trading Company – loan deadline extension request.

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, Council Tax Revenue and Capital Budgets, as a tenant of the Council.

54. Minutes – 17 October 2024 & 11 December 2024

It was agreed unanimously:

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the words “County Council” to “County Councillor” in the third paragraph on page 5.

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 December 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

55. Chair’s Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- In the absence of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, the Director Operations was the lead officer for the meeting.
- The Council had been awarded DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation.

- On behalf of the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Chair asked all councillors to ensure that their declaration of interest forms were up to date and to complete their related parties' declarations, as our external auditors had highlighted issues in these areas.
- Agenda item 16 and the paragraph regarding the private session were removed from the agenda as they were deemed superfluous.

56. Petitions

No petitions had been received.

57. Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10

No Motions had been received.

58. Notice of Recission Motion under Procedure Rule 20

The Chair reported that the motion to rescind the Motion agreed by Council on 17 October 2024 to commence a new Local Plan had the required support of a proposer, seconder and three additional councillors.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that after the Council unanimously decided to initiate a new Local Plan in October, the Government revealed intentions to eliminate the authority and shift spatial planning duties to the Mayor. The Leader determined that investing hundreds of thousands in a possibly redundant Local Plan would be imprudent.

Cllr Lorna Dupré concurred that the Council should rescind its decision from October due to the proposed local government reorganisation and new mayoral powers. She also pointed out that the current plan will be 10 years old in April because of earlier delays in developing a new Local Plan. In response, Cllr Anna Bailey clarified that the previous local plan had been withdrawn after the planning inspector removed key elements, including the community-led development policy and the requirement for disability access. The inspector also imposed housing numbers without supporting evidence, leading to the withdrawal of this draft local plan. The Council had been waiting for government guidance before proceeding, which contributed to the delay.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott endorsed the recommendation, noting that, in light of the proposed reorganisation of local government, proceeding would be an irresponsible use of taxpayers' money. He expressed concerns over the Government's proposals to grant the Mayor planning powers, which he believed would adversely affect rural areas. Cllr Vellacott stressed the importance of maintaining a five-year land supply and appreciated that the authority was above this threshold, enabling it to continue exercising control over development. He also advocated for neighbourhood plans and highlighted the necessity of consulting residents.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed to:

Rescind the Motion of Council on 17 October 2024, in relation to the commencement of the New East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

59. Questions From Members

No questions had been received.

60. Pay Policy Statement

The HR Manager presented this report (Z135, previously circulated), which invited the Council to agree to the Pay Policy Statement for 2025-26. She explained that the Council was required to approve a Pay Policy Statement as part of the Localism Act. Cllr Alan Sharp thanked the HR Manager for her efforts on this matter. It was a statutory obligation that the Council needed to agree to by 31 March. Cllr Christine Colbert suggested that the lump sum payment for outstanding staff performance should be a specified amount rather than 1% of basic pay, to benefit lower-paid staff. Cllr Lorna Dupré proposed that all Council officers receive a real living wage of £12.60 per hour. The HR Manager acknowledged that these issues could be considered in a future review. Cllr Ian Bovingdon reported that the Finance and Assets Committee had discussed this issue and would assist with any review, expressing gratitude to the HR Manager for her work.

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed to:

Approve and adopt the 2025-26 Pay Policy Statement.

61. Recommendations from Committees and other Member Bodies

Council considered report Z136, previously circulated, detailing recommendations from two meetings of the Finance and Assets Committees as follows:

1. Finance & Assets Committee – 28 November 2024

a) Treasury Operations Mid-Year Review 2024-25

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously resolved:

That the Mid-Year Review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, be noted.

2. Finance & Assets Committee – 30 January 2025

a) Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed:

That the 2026/27 figures had been corrected and checked and approval given to:

- i. The 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy
- ii. The Annual Investment Strategy
- iii. The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement
- iv. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators

b) Constitutional Update – Contract Procedures

Cllr Alan Sharp explained that this was required to ensure our Constitution remained in line with the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force on 24th February 2025. He proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed:

that the updated Contract Procedure Rules, at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as an update to the Council's Constitution.

62. East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC) – loan deadline extension request

The Director Finance introduced this report (Z138, already circulated), which invited the Council to respond to East Cambs Trading Company's (ECTC) request to extend the loan repayment deadline from March 2027 to March 2029. This request was prompted by an opportunity to collaborate with Haddenham Community Land Trust to develop approximately 30 properties, one third of which were affordable homes.

Cllr Anna Bailey was delighted to endorse the report's recommendations, as the ECTC had previously collaborated with Haddenham Community Land Trust to provide high-quality new homes.

Cllr Gareth Wilson expressed his support for the proposed affordable housing development in Haddenham, highlighting the importance of community backing. He noted that residents supported the Community Land Trust and would likely back this initiative. Cllr Ian Bovingdon agreed, stating that existing ECTC developments were excellent examples, and he expressed his support for the proposed development.

Cllr Lorna Dupré backed the Haddenham Community Land Trust and the loan extension. She hoped that 40% of the homes constructed in the Haddenham development would be affordable housing.

Cllr John Trapp stated that he supported the provision of additional affordable housing and the objectives of Haddenham Community Land Trust, but he voiced concerns about the extension of an unconditional loan.

Cllr Anna Bailey explained that the ECTC had an incentive to pay back its loan in a timely manner as this would minimise the interest paid and would maximise the number of affordable housing units constructed.

Cllr Alan Sharp backed the recommendations in the report as they would offer affordable housing for residents. The ECTC had an excellent record, and the Council should take pride in it.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Alan Sharp seconded the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken, and with 26 votes in favour and 1 abstention, it was agreed:

- i. To approve the ECTC request for a loan repayment extension from March 2027 to 2029, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report; and
- ii. To authorise the Director Finance and Director Legal to amend the Loan Agreement and Debenture Agreement to implement (i) above.

63. Council Tax, Revenue and Capital Budgets

The Director Finance presented this report (Z139, previously circulated), which outlined the Council's proposed revenue budget, capital strategy, and the required level of Council Tax for 2025/26. It also evaluated the robustness of the budgets and the adequacy of reserves while updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Director Finance explained that following the decision to rescind the motion for a new Local Plan, Members should review the revised appendices 2 and 3 without the Local Plan costs. This change positively impacted the Finance and Assets Committee Report, reducing the Surplus Savings Reserve requirement for balancing the 2025/26 budget from £2.149 million to £1.813 million.

The Director Finance stated that the Council had a balanced budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27 by utilising its Surplus Savings Reserve, which meant no immediate changes to service delivery were necessary. However, the Council faced a significant savings requirement in the third and fourth years of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and funding beyond 2026/27 remains uncertain due to the forthcoming Local Government Fair Funding Review.

Cllr Anna Bailey expressed her pride in supporting a balanced budget with no external borrowing and a freeze on Council Tax for the twelfth consecutive year. Free parking will continue in the district's towns and city centre with no increases in parking charges. Unlike 70% of other authorities, the Council does not charge for garden waste collection and provides additional green and blue bin services at no extra cost. The Council has received £5.8 million from East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC), with 29% of its income coming from external sources. She voiced concern that the Government's funding review may penalise authorities that have frozen their Council Tax, and she urged the area's MP to advocate for their cause in Westminster.

Cllr Lorna Dupré proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Cllr Christine Whelan.

To approve:

- i) The formal Council Tax Resolution, which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1
- ii) The draft revenue budget for 2025/26 and MTFS for 2026/27 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendices 2(a) and 2(b) – LibDem, specifically to reflect the following proposals:
 - To remove the costs associated with the Local Plan (as discussed earlier on the agenda), £300,000 in 2025/26 and 2026/27 and £150,000 in 2027/28
 - To remove the capital cost and all future revenue streams in relation to the Bereavement Centre project
 - To fund the initial capital cost (£600,000) and then on-going revenue costs to implement Civil Parking Enforcement within the District (£40,000 in 2026/27 and future years). (Capital cost to be funded from a revenue contribution)
 - To increase the Environment Fund from £100,000 to £200,000 per year
 - To provide funding for Arts and tourism £100,000 per year
 - To build in a £200,000 per annum turnover allowance on staff costs in recognition that there will be staff vacancies throughout the year
- iii) A Council Tax freeze in 2025/26
- iv) The draft Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3 - LibDem
- v) The draft Capital Strategy and financing as set out in Appendix 4 - LibDem
- vi) The 2025/26 Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 5
- vii) The application of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure 40% Business Rate relief (which will be fully funded by the Government through Section 31) as detailed in sections 6.6 to 6.7 of this report and any other Business Rate reliefs that may be announced in the national budget (as detailed in section 6.8).
- viii) The changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and premiums for Long-Term Empty and Second Homes as detailed in sections 11.8 and 11.9 of this report.

PROPOSER: Cllr Lorna Dupre
SECONDER: Cllr Christine Whelan

Cllr Dupré explained that the amendment would allocate additional funding for tourism and the arts, as the current administration had transferred these responsibilities to the City of Ely Council. The amendment also proposed local climate initiatives and civil parking enforcement. Funding would arise from the £200,000 set aside for unfilled officer posts and halting the crematorium development in Mepal. The proposals did not necessitate an increase in Council Tax.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that civil parking enforcement was the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council, and she suggested that the proposal be made to them, as they had agreed to implement it in South Cambridgeshire at no cost to the district council. She added that the £600,000 budgeted in the amendment would not suffice to cover the costs, estimating that expenses for Fenland could reach £1 million

and that East Cambridgeshire had more roads. In rural areas, parking enforcement often incurs higher expenses than revenue. She estimated that four enforcement officers would be needed, significantly exceeding the £40,000 per year allocated in the budget amendment. She suggested that the Council would have to charge for all car parking to cover these costs. The proposed crematorium at Mepal would generate income, while the site currently incurred maintenance and vandalism costs. She explained that the responsibilities for Ely's facility had been transferred to the City of Ely Council at their request. She argued that funding proposals through staff vacancies were irresponsible, which pressured managers to delay recruitment. She concluded that although the amendment sought to keep Council Tax frozen, it could significantly impact the budget in the long term.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott stated that the Council had already committed to building a crematorium in Mepal, which he believed would be successful. He could not support an amendment to reverse this decision. He criticised the introduction of civil parking enforcement, claiming it would be more costly than beneficial, and suggested that the police handle illegal parking instead. He questioned the funding sources for civil parking enforcement, pointing out inconsistencies in budget allocations and queried why it was being funded through the capital budget for community transport. He concluded that the proposals shared only the previous evening had not received adequate scrutiny and should not be approved.

Cllr Mark Inskip reported an annual underspend of over £200,000 on the staffing budget due to unfilled vacancies. This underspend could be utilised to support the arts and tourism sectors, benefiting both Ely and the district's businesses. The district currently lacked civil parking enforcement, which had resulted in increased illegal parking. The proposed amendment sought to collaborate with the community to reduce the carbon footprint and tackle climate change.

Cllr Bill Hunt stated that the Council was well-regarded among residents because they could moor their boats and park their cars free of charge. He opposed expenditure on civil parking enforcement and other traffic controls, arguing that depending on potential staff vacancies for funding could result in external borrowing. Therefore, he would not support the amendment.

Cllr Alan Sharp anticipated that the Finance and Assets Committee would discuss the business case for Babylon Arts. It had cost Fenland District Council £1 million for car park enforcement road markings and signage, which could prove unpopular with the public, as it had on Mill Road, Cambridge. He explained that an underspend due to staff vacancies could result in higher temporary staff costs, making it an unreliable funding source for other projects.

Cllr John Trapp reported that residents were complaining about illegal parking in Ely, Soham, and other areas within the district, but no action had been taken. Although car parking enforcement had been promised, it did not occur. Funding could be sourced from fines, similar to Mildenhall. He suggested that investing in cycleways would be more beneficial than the proposed crematorium, which he deemed unviable.

Cllr Charlotte Cane explained that only capital grants were available for arts and tourism groups, whereas many organisations needed administrative support, which

this proposed amendment would provide. Several members noted that residents frequently raised parking issues.

Cllr Christine Whelan stated that the amendment aimed to address residents' needs by supporting parish councils in achieving net zero and funding organisations such as Babylon Arts.

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that supporting the initiatives of the amendment would require increasing the Council Tax, rather than freezing it for the twelfth consecutive year. The Council managed Explore East Cambs, which promoted local attractions online, and a new tourism app was set to be launched with funding from the Combined Authority. The City of Ely Council had requested to assume responsibility for organisations in the city centre, but Councillor Bailey clarified that parking enforcement continued to be the responsibility of the County Council and the police.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment, and these were cast as follows:

For (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Against (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Abstain (0)

The amendment was defeated.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott backed the report's recommendations to freeze Council Tax and keep parking charges unchanged while enhancing waste services, planning and community facilities.

Cllr Lorna Dupré remarked that the budget represented a missed opportunity to invest in tourism, the arts, climate change initiatives, and civil parking enforcement. She highlighted the administration's unsuccessful collaboration with the police regarding parking controls and their decision to decline a County Council grant to address this issue. Cllr Dupré argued that if the crematorium project went ahead, it could instigate a price war with existing providers. She concluded that while the Council benefited from the Government's funding system, the budget did not satisfy residents' needs and desires.

Cllr Alan Sharp explained that the Finance and Assets Committee would review robust business cases from organisations applying for grants. He concluded that the public had supported the current administration through their votes in 2015, 2019, and 2023.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that the administration had balanced the budget while providing free car parking and funding for tourism and the arts. She anticipated that

in 2028, the Council would merge into a unitary authority, likely increasing Council Tax.

Cllr Anna Bailey explained that the administration supported tourism and the arts and would collaborate with stakeholders in the future. She had not requested civil parking enforcement from the County Council but had asked the police to address illegal parking. She encouraged members in favour of civil parking enforcement to reach out to the County Council. Cllr Bailey expressed pride in the infrastructure investments made during her six years as Leader of the Council and in the decision to freeze Council Tax again.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed the recommendations in the report, with Cllr Julia Huffer seconding them. A vote was taken, and the results were as follows:

For (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Against (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Abstain (0)

Council agreed to approve:

- a) The formal Council Tax Resolution which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1
- b) The draft revenue budget for 2025/26 and MTFS for 2026/27 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendices 2(a) and 2(b)
- c) A Council Tax freeze in 2025/26
- d) The draft Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3
- e) The draft Capital Strategy and financing as set out in Appendix 4.
- f) The 2025/26 Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 5.
- g) The application of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure 40% Business Rate relief (which will be fully funded by the Government through Section 31) as detailed in sections 6.6 to 6.7 of this report and any other Business Rate reliefs that may be announced in the national budget (as detailed in section 6.8).
- h) The changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and premiums for Long-Term Empty and Second Homes as detailed in sections 11.8 and 11.9 of this report.

64. Community Infrastructure Levy – Infrastructure List & Governance

The Director Community presented this report (Z137, previously circulated), inviting the Council to consider amendments to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Infrastructure List and Governance Arrangements. She explained that three changes were proposed, and updated figures were detailed in the report and appendices.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that adopting the Community Infrastructure Levy, which enabled the Council to collect over £35 million for infrastructure, was one of the most successful initiatives undertaken by the authority. £6 million of this funding had been allocated to parish and town councils within the district. She explained that to better reflect the area's changing needs, the administration aimed to reprofile the fund's objectives to support projects throughout the district.

Cllr Lorna Dupré requested that the Council suspend Standing Order 20 to remove the funding for the crematorium at Mepal. The Chair explained that a two-thirds majority of those present, which amounted to 18 members, was needed to suspend Standing Orders.

A vote was taken, and with 13 votes in favour and 14 votes against:
The request to suspend Standing Order 20 was rejected.

Cllr Lorna Dupré expressed her disappointment that the Council would not discuss an amendment to allocate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for the crematorium project. She believed these funds should be redirected to other projects, such as the Soham Medical Centre, and said she would vote against the recommendation.

Cllr Charlotte Cane concurred with Cllr Dupré that the CIL funding should not be allocated to the proposed crematorium. She maintained that the funds should be directed towards Littleport Schools, leisure services, the expansion of the country park, and the Staploe Health Centre in Soham. She was not assured by assertions that these projects would receive funding in the future.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott backed funding for a crematorium at Mepal, which would offer a much-needed service for grieving residents. Although healthcare was not a statutory responsibility, the Council financed it while balancing other priorities.

Cllr Mark Inskip opposed funding for the proposed crematorium, which would have to compete with existing private sector facilities and, potentially, other crematoriums under a new authority. Instead, he argued that these funds should be used to support inclusive play and open spaces, improvements to schools in Littleport, an extension of the country park, or to fund much-needed health services in the district. He questioned how one could argue that funding would be made available for these projects in the future when that future was so uncertain due to the proposed local government reorganisation.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that the Council should promote infrastructure such as cycle paths to benefit residents now, instead of spending money on vanity projects that a larger unitary authority would take over.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that the opposition group's amendment was shared only a few minutes before the meeting, leaving inadequate time for proper consideration. Cllr Anna Bailey described the proposal as a negating amendment based on misunderstanding how CIL funding works. She confirmed that the administration would fund facilities when they were ready, including accessible play areas. Cllr Bailey explained that Staploe Medical Centre had been on the CIL funding list since

2015, but no funds had been allocated due to the absence of an application and a lack of planning permission. The Council pledged to fund the final third of the medical centre's costs but was still waiting for the request.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations outlined in the report. Cllr Lorna Dupré requested a recorded vote. A vote was taken, and the votes were cast as follows:

For (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Against (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Abstain (0)

The Council agreed to:

- a) Approve the Infrastructure List as set out in Appendix 2
- b) Approve the draft Governance Arrangements as set out in Appendix 3, and
- c) Authorise the Director Community, in consultation with the Chair of Finance & Assets Committee, to spend CIL receipts from the Kennett Garden Village Development as detailed in 3.12 of this report.

65. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Update Reports

Council

Agreed to:

Note the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority.

The meeting concluded at 8:33 pm

Chair.....

Date.....



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council
held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE
on Thursday 20 March 2025 at 6.00pm

Present

Councillor Chika Akinwale
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Anna Bailey
Councillor Ian Bovingdon
Councillor David Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Charlotte Cane
Councillor Christine Colbert
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Mark Goldsack (Chair)
Councillor Martin Goodearl
Councillor Keith Horgan
Councillor Julia Huffer

Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor James Lay
Councillor David Miller
Councillor Kelli Pettitt
Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Ross Trent
Councillor Lucius Vellacott
Councillor Mary Wade
Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Gareth Wilson

66. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

67. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann and Cllr Caroline Shepherd.

68. Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer reported that as Cambridgeshire County Council had already voted on the Government's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation, those members who were also County Councillors needed to come to the debate on agenda item 6 with an open mind.

69. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

70. The Making of the Modified Witchford Neighbourhood Plan

The Director Operations presented the report, Z143 previously circulated, which invited Council to include the modified Witchford Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire with immediate effect. It was noted that Witchford Parish Council had decided to amend its Neighbourhood Plan to include a new chapter on tackling climate change.

Cllr Bill Hunt praised Witchford Parish Council and all those involved in the amendment of the Neighbourhood Plan, which required hard work and teamwork.

Cllr Lorna Dupré, the County Councillor for Witchford, expressed her support for the recommendations in the report. She congratulated those involved on including a chapter on addressing climate change in the Plan. She hoped that this would set a precedent for others to either amend their existing Plans or incorporate climate change in their original Plans.

Cllr Anna Bailey, Leader of Council, and Cllr Mark Goldsack, Chair of Council, both congratulated those involved in amending the Plan.

Cllr Bill Hunt proposed and Cllr Lorna Dupré seconded the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to:

- a) Congratulate Witchford Parish Council on their preparation of a successful modification of their Neighbourhood Plan; and
- b) Formally make the Witchford Neighbourhood Plan (as modified 2025) (attached at Appendix 1) part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire with immediate effect

71. Local Government Reorganisation – Submission to Government

The Director Operations presented the report, Z154 previously circulated, which updated Council on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals and next steps.

Cllr Anna Bailey expressed her belief that East Cambridgeshire District Council was the best authority she had worked with during her career. While she understood the Government's goal of a single unitary authority, she believed that smaller authorities were better at supporting residents. She thanked staff for their achievements, including freezing council tax, while maintaining high service levels. She pointed out that other local authorities often had to use part of their council tax to pay interest on their debts and a larger authority could hinder local services and face-to-face interactions. A recent survey with 809 responses showed that 78% of residents opposed the Government's proposals. Cllr Bailey concluded by stating that current data was insufficient to consider different models and hoped that Council would agree to explore various solutions.

Cllr Mark Inskip emphasised that the current structure, established 50 years ago, needed reviewing. He supported unitary authorities, as they allowed councillors to address a wide range of residents' concerns, including roads, social services and planning. However, he criticised the Government's rushed proposals and the November deadline, which prevented addressing the county boundary anomalies. He agreed that the Council should support the recommendations in the report and work with others to ensure that the residents of the district were represented.

Cllr Keith Horgan noted that Peterborough and Cambridge City Councils both had significant debt, whilst this Council was debt free. He feared that the reorganisation could lead to higher Council Tax for residents to cover the interest on loans taken out by neighbouring authorities.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott agreed that insufficient research had been done for the Council to recommend solutions to the Government's reorganisation proposals. He expressed concern that Council Tax for local residents would have to increase. He suggested that the Government's reorganisation plans looked more like centralisation than devolution. He supported the recommendations in the report, as the best way to represent the district's residents.

Cllr Alan Sharp agreed with Cllr Inskip that unitary authorities were commendable as they simplified governance. However, the Government's proposals were being imposed on local government with little discussion and had not been included in their manifesto. He expressed concerns regarding the level of debt being held by neighbouring authorities and the effect the impending changes could have on staff morale. He regretted the lack of opportunity to discuss the alteration of council boundaries around Newmarket. He hoped and expected that there would be further discussion on the proposals before the Government's November deadline.

Cllr Bill Hunt stated that he had been a councillor for 18 years and expressed regret over the Government's decision to abolish the Council, describing it as a friendly authority that was supported by its residents.

Cllr Lorna Dupré criticised the Government's rushed reorganisation process, which she deemed inconsiderate and unlikely to resolve longstanding county boundary issues. She recognised an opportunity to create a beneficial governance structure and hoped that discussions on possible models would commence shortly with a cross party working group formed to explore options, as had happened at the County Council.

Cllr David Miller criticised the Government's reorganisation process, stating he preferred to have an option to maintain the current structure.

Cllr John Trapp stated that residents in his ward looked south towards Cambridge. He suggested that a future unitary authority should have multiple planning committees, to ensure local focus. He supported having one elected representative for residents' queries. He also supported Cllr Dupré's idea of forming a cross party group to collaborate with parish councils.

Cllr Alison Whelan asserted that any new governance arrangements must support local residents, particularly those without internet access or the ability to travel far. She suggested that parish councils should assume more responsibility for local representation and expected that local government reorganisation would be added to the Council's risk register.

Cllr Julia Huffer expressed her sorrow that residents might lose local representation due to local government reorganisation. She feared future councillors would mostly be full time politicians who were either retired or wealthy, rather than volunteers serving in their spare time.

Cllr Anna Bailey acknowledged the challenges of maintaining local representation and questioned whether a larger unitary authority would be more efficient than smaller councils. She was committed to ongoing engagement with parish councils and residents, suggesting that the Combined Authority could assume the responsibilities of the County Council instead of abolishing the lower-tier councils.

Cllr Mark Goldsack, Chair of Council, thanked officers and senior councillors for their efforts in drafting the letter to the Government and he encouraged all councillors to contribute to future proposals.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed to:

- a) Note the progress of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- b) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the proposed letter as set out in Appendix 1 along with other Council Leaders, as our interim submission to Government by 21 March 2025.

The meeting concluded at 6:58 pm

Chair.....

Date.....

LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, GROUP LEADERS AND DEPUTIES

Committee: Annual Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Democratic Services & Elections Manager

Report No: AA1

Contact Officer:

Jane Webb, Democratic Services & Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk , 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1. To receive details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. That the details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming municipal year, as reported at the Annual Council meeting be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Council's declared Political Groups and their Leaders and Deputies are as follows:

<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>
Anna Bailey (Leader)	Julia Huffer	Lucius Vellacott
Julia Huffer (Deputy)	Anna Bailey	Lucius Vellacott
<u>Liberal Democrat & Independent</u>	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>
Lorna Dupré (Leader)	Gareth Wilson	Mark Inskip
Christine Whelan (Deputy)	Gareth Wilson	Mark Inskip

- 3.2. In accordance with Article 2.03(b) of the Council Constitution, if there is no majority Group, then the Council can elect from any of its Group Leaders.

4.0 APPENDICES

None

Background Documents

None

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

Committee: Annual Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Democratic Services & Elections Manager

Report No: AA2

Contact Officer:

Jane Webb, Democratic Services & Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk , 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1. To receive details of the political balance of the Council and the implications for the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. That Council notes the details of the political balance of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 and approves the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies as detailed, or agrees an alternative (on a Nem Con basis, if necessary).

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1. Attached at Appendix 1 is a table showing the allocation of places on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies in accordance with the requirements of the proportionality rules. Under Section 15(5)(a) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (see below), all seats on a Committee/Sub-Committee cannot be allocated to the same Political Group. Since Councillor Lee Denney has elected to join the Liberal Democrat Group following the Stretham District By-Election on 1 May 2025, the calculations remain unchanged from last year.
- 3.2. Group Leaders have been advised of the number of places available on each Committee to be filled by their Groups and of any necessary adjustments to be made among the political Groups in their overall seat allocations.
- 3.3. At the Annual Council meeting held on 14 May 2013, the dissolution of the Council's Scrutiny Committee was approved. Similarly, the revised Committee structures approved by the Council on 15 April 2014, 11 April 2017, 11 April 2019, 23 February 2021 and 20 February 2024 did not include a Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4. Agenda Item 15 deals with the appointments to be made to fill those places on Committees and other Member bodies.

4.0 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989

4.1. Section 15(5) of the Act sets down the principles for the allocation of seats on Committees between the political Groups on the Council. The principles are applied in sequence and provide a safeguard to enable any distortion caused by rounding up or down to be remedied. The principles require, in effect, that:

- (a) all seats are not allocated to the same political Group.
- (b) the majority of seats are allocated to the political Group having a majority of the authority's membership.
- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the TOTAL of all committees allocated to a political Group bears the same proportion as the proportion of the seats held on full Council (this principle allows any accumulated distortion caused by rounding up or down in (d) below to be remedied).
- (d) subject to (a) to (c) above, the number of seats on each Committee allocated to a political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on full Council.

4.2 The effect of rounding up or down across the overall number of seats to be allocated to Committees can be quite significant, which is why the principles explicitly provide for any distortion to be rectified

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proportionality calculations & allocation of places on Committees, Sub-Committees

Background Documents

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY – PROPOSAL TO MEET PRINCIPLE a-d OF THE LGHA 1989

28 Members aligned to Political Groups

28 aligned Members – 60 seats

APPENDIX 14

PARTY	NO. OF COUNCILLORS	PROPORTION OF TOTAL			
Conservative	14	50%			
Liberal Democrat & Ind	14	50%			
	28	100%			
BODY	TOTAL MEMBERS ON BODY	CONSERVATIVE [proportion of seats: 50%]		LIBERAL DEMOCRAT & IND [proportion of seats: 50%]	
Full Council	28	14	14	14	14
Finance and Assets	12	6	6	6	6
Operational Services	12	6	6	6	6
Audit	6	3	3	3	3
Planning Committee	12	6	6	6	6
F&A Ethical Governance Sub-Committee	8	4	4	4	4
Licensing (Non-Stat) Sub Committee	6	3	3	3	3
Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee	4	2	2	2	2
Total Seats on ordinary committees under strict proportionality	60	30	30	30	30
Total Seats	60		30		30

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES (INCLUDING SUBSTITUTES) AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES 2025/26

Committee: Annual Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Democratic Services & Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Report No: AA3

Contact Officer:

Jane Webb, Democratic Services & Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk , 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1. To consider the appointment of Members and substitutes to Committees, Sub-Committees, and other Member bodies for 2025/26.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. That Council approves the membership of Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member bodies for 2025/26, as attached at Appendix 1.

- 2.1.1. That Council approve the appointment of a Lay Member, as set out in Appendix 1, to the Audit Committee.

- 2.2. That Council approves an amendment to the Constitution to allow an equal allocation of committee seats on the following sub-committees that do not fall under the political proportionality ruling:

- Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee
- Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee
- Licensing Sub-Committee (Statutory)

- 2.2.2. That the Council approve the appointments of 2 Independent Persons and 2 Co-Opted Town/Parish Councillor Members, as set out in Appendix 1, on the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1. A list of Committees, Sub-Committees, and other Member bodies for 2025/26 is set out in Appendix 1, several sub-committees and informal member groups have been established by the relevant committees. The sub-committees mentioned in Section 2.2 have been included in this report to align them with the Committees that were adjusted to reflect equal political proportionality numbers at the Extraordinary Council in December 2024. These Committees are also detailed in Appendix 1 for approval.

- 3.2. Group Leaders have been advised of the number of places available to be filled by their respective Groups on each body, as per the rules relating to proportionality (see also Agenda Item 14).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - List of Membership of Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member bodies

Background Documents

ECDC Constitution – Part 3: Responsibility for Functions (A) Council, (B) Policy Committees, (C) Regulatory Committees & (D) Other Committees/Joint Committees

COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES 202526

FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE (12) 6:6 and up to 3 Subs	OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (12) 6:6 and up to 3 Subs	PLANNING COMMITTEE (12) 6:6 and up to 3 Subs	LICENSING COMMITTEE (12) 6:6 and up 3 subs
<p><u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Anna Bailey Ian Bovingdon Mark Goldsack Bill Hunt David Miller Alan Sharp</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Christine Ambrose Smith Martin Goodearl Julia Huffer</p>	<p><u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Christine Ambrose Smith Martin Goodearl Julia Huffer David Brown Alan Sharp Lucius Vellacott</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Anna Bailey Lavinia Edwards David Miller</p>	<p><u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Christine Ambrose Smith Mark Goldsack Lavinia Edwards Martin Goodearl Bill Hunt Alan Sharp</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Keith Horgan Julia Huffer Lucius Vellacott</p>	<p><u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Christine Ambrose Smith Lavinia Edwards Martin Goodearl Keith Horgan Julia Huffer Mark Goldsack</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Ian Bovingdon Bill Hunt Alan Sharp</p>
<p><u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Chika Akinwale Lee Denney John Trapp Mary Wade Alison Whelan (Lead Member) Christine Whelan</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Charlotte Cane Christine Colbert Kathrin Holtzmann</p>	<p><u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Christine Colbert Kathrin Holtzmann Mark Inskip (Lead Member) John Trapp Ross Trent Christine Whelan</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Lee Denney Mary Wade Alison Whelan</p>	<p><u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Chika Akinwale Christine Colbert James Lay John Trapp Ross Trent Christine Whelan (Lead Member)</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Lee Denney Lorna Dupré Mary Wade</p>	<p><u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Charlotte Cane Mark Inskip John Trapp (Lead Member) Christine Whelan Gareth Wilson</p> <p><u>Substitutes:</u> Chika Akinwale Lorna Dupré Vacancy</p>

COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES 2024/25

AUDIT COMMITTEE (6) 3:3 and up to 2 Subs	ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE (1) 1:0 and 2 Subs	FINANCE & ASSETS (ETHICAL GOVERNANCE) SUB-COMMITTEE (8) 4:4 2 Independent Persons 2 Co-opted Town/Parish Councillor Members	PERSONNEL APPEALS SUB- COMMITTEE (4) 2:2
<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> David Brown Keith Horgan Lucius Vellacott <u>Substitutes:</u> Lavinia Edwards	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Keith Horgan <u>Substitutes:</u> Anna Bailey Alan Sharp	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Ian Bovingdon Bill Hunt Alan Sharp Lucius Vellacott <u>Substitutes:</u> Anna Bailey Mark Goldsack David Miller	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Ian Bovingdon Alan Sharp
<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Lorna Dupré (Lead Member) James Lay Ross Trent <u>Substitutes:</u> Mark Inskip Gareth Wilson	<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> None <u>Substitutes:</u> None	<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Charlotte Cane Ross Trent Alison Whelan Christine Whelan <u>Substitutes:</u>	<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Christine Colbert Mary Wade
<u>Lay Member</u> Stephen Joyce		<u>Independent Persons:</u> Gillian Holmes Stuart Webster	
		<u>Co-opted Town/Parish Councillor Members:</u> Cllr Rosemary Aitchison (Soham TC) Vacancy	

COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES 2024/25

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (STATUTORY) (4) 2:2 and up to 2 Subs	LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (NON-STATUTORY) (6) 3:3		
<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Lavinia Edwards Keith Horgan <u>Substitutes:</u> Martin Goodearl Julia Huffer	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u> Martin Goodearl Julia Huffer Keith Horgan		
<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Charlotte Cane John Trapp <u>Substitutes:</u> Gareth Wilson	<u>LIB DEM & IND</u> Lorna Dupré John Trapp Gareth Wilson		

<u>Combined Authority Appointments</u>	
CPCA Board Main Member: Anna Bailey Sub: Julia Huffer	Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee Main Member: Martin Goodearl Sub: Julia Huffer
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Main Member: Lucius Vellacott Sub: Keith Horgan Main: Charlotte Cane Sub: Cllr Alison Whelan	Investment Committee Main Member: Alan Sharp Sub: Ian Bovingdon
Audit & Governance Committee Main Member: David Brown Sub: Kelli Pettitt	Skills & Employment Committee Main Member: Kelli Pettitt Sub: Julia Huffer
	Transport & Infrastructure Committee Main Member: Alan Sharp Sub: Bill Hunt

SCHEDULE OF ITEMS RECOMMENDED FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES

Committee: Annual Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Democratic Services & Elections Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Report No: AA4

Contact Officer:

Jane Webb, Democratic Services & Elections Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

1.0 AUDIT COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2025

Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25

The Committee considered the Audit Committee's Annual Report for recommendation to full Council, (Z166, previously circulated), presented by the Director Finance.

The Chair proposed, and the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report.

In response to questioning, Rachel Ashley-Caunt – Head of Internal Audit, stated that:

- The ARP recommendations and action plans for improvements are taken from audit reports, which can be requested if needed.
- In the Internal Audit's Annual Report, it was noted that 17% of agreed management actions were not implemented as of March 2024. When presenting the report at Full Council, it's recommended to acknowledge this 17%, while also highlighting that efforts in 2024/25 have reduced outstanding audit recommendations to zero.

Stephen Joyce, an Independent Lay Person, noted that while the summary was clear, it did not fully capture the depth of the Committee's discussions and endorsements. It also missed insights from the external audit regarding the disclaimed opinion and gave only a brief mention of the importance of the Risk Register. It was agreed that these points would be included in Cllr Brown's introductory remarks when presenting the report at the Full Council meeting.

It was unanimously resolved to RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:

- **That the Audit Committee Annual Report be approved.**

Title: Annual Report 2024/25

Committee: Audit Committee

Date: 15th April 2025

Author: Director, Finance

Report No: Z166

Contact Officer:

Ian Smith,

Director, Finance

ian.smith@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01353 616470, Room 104, The Grange, Ely

1.0 Issue

- 1.1. To review the Audit Committee's Annual Report and recommend this for approval to Full Council.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1. To recommend to Full Council to approve this report.

3.0 Background

- 3.1. It is considered best practice for the Audit Committee to report to Full Council on its activities at the end of each municipal year. This had not been the case at East Cambs, but a first report was produced at the end of 2023/24. This is therefore the second such report and provides details of the Committee's activities during the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 3.2. The constitution, objectives and Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee are detailed in the Constitution.

3.3. Constitution

This Committee shall comprise of 5 Members of Council [6 since December 2024] and one Lay Member (without voting rights) who shall be appointed by full Council. Its quorum is 3 (excluding the lay member). Members of the Finance & Assets Committee and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council are excluded from membership of the Audit Committee.

3.4 Objectives

Oversight and approval of Statement of Accounts, Internal and External Audit, and Risk Management matters (not otherwise the responsibility of the Council or any other Committee).

3.5 Terms of Reference

The Committee's terms of reference shall be:-

To act as the Council's Audit Committee and the discharge of these duties and responsibilities including:-

- consideration of Annual Audit letter to Members, Annual Audit and Inspection Fee Letter and the External Auditor Annual Governance Report, Annual Audit Plan and Code of Audit Practice and Statement of Responsibilities;
- approve the Annual Governance Statement;
- approve the Statement of Accounts;
- approve the Code of Corporate Governance;

To agree the Internal Audit Terms of Reference and Internal Audit Plan, review and consider the Plan, any Annual Report and/or Opinion.

To oversee and approve the Code of Corporate Governance. To oversee the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements including Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

To oversee and monitor the Council's Corporate Risk Register and recommend revisions to the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

To appoint 'Member Champions' as required.

To make nominations to any relevant outside bodies for the Audit Committee from the wider membership of the Council for a period of up to 4 years.

4.0 Audit Committee Activity in 2024/25

4.1. The Audit Committee met on five occasions during the 2024/25 municipal year:

- 22nd May 2024 (following Full Council)
- 16th July 2024
- 19th November 2024
- 3rd February 2025
- 15th April 2025

4.2. The Committee has reflected the political balance of the Council. At the start of the year, this meant that there were three Conservative councillors and two Liberal Democrat councillors, but following the Council decision at its Extraordinary Meeting on the 11th December 2024, this changed to be three Conservative councillors and three councillors from the Liberal Democrat and Independent Group.

4.3. The Liberal Democrat's Group did not utilise their seats on Committee prior to the change in arrangements, but have attended the meetings in 2025.

4.4. An Independent / Lay Member was appointed onto the Committee as a non-voting member. The first meeting that he attended was 16th July 2024 and he has attended each subsequent meeting.

- 4.5. The lead officer to the Committee is the Director, Finance, supported by the Director Legal (monitoring officer). Other officer attendees are the Head of Internal Audit and the External Audit Manager, with then other report authors attending to present their reports.
- 4.6. Committee received the following reports during the year:

External Audit Reports

- Interim Value for Money Report for 2022/23
- External Audit Results Report for 2022/23 – because of the long outstanding issue regarding the backlog within the Local Government Audit system, EY were only able to give a “disclaimed audit” opinion for 2022/23. In reality, a “disclaimed audit opinion” meant that EY had been unable to complete their Audit work prior to the November backstop date announced by Government, and so couldn’t issue a full certificate. It didn’t in anyway, suggest there was anything wrong with the Statements.
- Audit Plan 2023/24
- External Audit Results Report for 2023/24 – as EY gave a “disclaimed audit” opinion on the 2022/23 Statements, even though they undertook an extensive review of the 2023/24 Statements, they were still only able to give a disclaimed audit opinion for the year, as they couldn’t validate some of the bought forward balances or the prior year comparisons. As before, this didn’t in anyway, suggest there was anything wrong with the Statements.

Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement

- Statement of Accounts 2022/23 – These were approved at the meeting on the 19th November 2024.
- Draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24
- Statement of Accounts 2023/24 – These were approved at the meeting on the 3rd February 2025.
- Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 – this was presented to two meetings, initially in draft and then a final version which was approved at the meeting on the 19th November 2024.

Internal Audit Reports

- Internal Audit – Annual Report and Opinion 2023/24 – the summary findings of which are below:

I am satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to inform an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control for 2023/24. In giving this opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the system of internal control.

It is my opinion that **Moderate Assurance** can be given over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s control environment for 2023/24. [Definition - There are gaps in the internal

control framework which pose a medium risk to delivery of the objectives.] This control environment comprises of the system of internal control, governance arrangements and risk management. Any limitations over this opinion are detailed and explained further below.

Financial control

Controls relating to the Council's key financial systems which were reviewed during the year were all concluded to be operating at a level of Moderate Assurance or above, with 92% of opinions given being of Good or Substantial Assurance.

Assurance over the outsourced revenues and benefits service has been provided in the form of internal audit reports issued for the Anglia Revenues Partnership shared service. These have all resulted in assurance opinions of 'Adequate / Reasonable', which is comparable to the Council's internal audit service's assurance opinion of 'Moderate'. This indicates a reduced assurance opinion from previous years, where areas of 'enforcement' and 'Council Tax Billing, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme' had received 'Good' assurance opinions in 2022/23. Action plans are in place for areas of improvement.

Risk management

The Council's structures and processes for identifying, assessing and managing risk have remained generally consistent during 2023/24.

Internal control

For the audits completed by the Internal Audit service in 2023/24, 97% of the opinions given in relation to the control environment and compliance have been of at least Moderate Assurance. The only opinion of Limited Assurance was in relation to Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) compliance. An action plan was agreed in relation to these findings and promptly progressed, providing assurance over actions taken to address areas of weakness. There have been no reports issued with an opinion of 'high' organisational impact.

The audit plan coverage had targeted areas of known risk and was informed through consultation with senior management and the Audit Committee.

Of the agreed management actions due for implementation during 2023/24, 83% had been completed during the year.

There have been no incidences during 2023/24 where the internal audit team have highlighted a fundamental risk or weakness and management have sought to accept the risk, rather than agree an appropriate action.

Internal Audit has not been made aware of any further governance, risk or internal control issues which would reduce the above opinion. No systems of controls can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance.

- Internal Audit Progress Reports 2024/25 (four reports)
- Internal Audit Plan Development for 2025/26
- Internal Audit Standards Report
- Internal Audit Charter and Strategy – this was approved on the 15th April 2025
- Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 – this was approved on the 15th April 2025

Other Reports

- Corporate Risk Management Monitoring Report (Risk Register) update reports (two reports)
- Annual Information Governance Report
- Audit Committee Annual Report – this report

4.7 On the 3rd February 2025, Audit Committee members met to conduct a self-assessment of good practice against the CIPFA Position Statement on the role of Audit Committees in local government. This was the second such meeting, the first having taken place in January 2024. Attendees found this a useful meeting and an opportunity to reflect on where the Committee was performing well and where further improvement could be made, to better align with best practice.

Within the CIPFA Position Statement Documentation at appendix E there is a scoring matrix which allows Committee members to assess performance against specific good practice criteria and come up with a score of overall performance. The Committee scored itself as 168 out of 200.

An action plan was produced as part of the exercise to improve the performance of Committee moving forward and this is attached below for information.

Action ref	Description	Timeframe
1	Updates to Council To introduce brief updates to Council on key items covered (i.e. assurances gained and areas for improvement / risk noted) following each meeting of the Audit Committee.	
2	Management attendance at meetings To explore options to facilitate attendance of wider management for relevant agenda items, as required.	
3	Forward plan and Terms of Reference (ToR) The ToR should be reviewed to ensure alignment with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022. To request a more detailed forward plan, beyond the next meeting, which can then be cross referenced to the ToR and ensure full coverage.	
4	Committee training / skills assessment To conduct a committee skills/training assessment, using a matrix based on the CIPFA guidance.	
5	Training plan Based on the outcome of action 4, above, to develop a training plan which can be delivered as pre-meeting sessions and cover key areas, ideally relating to the topics on the agenda that day.	

Action ref	Description	Timeframe
	To schedule initial introductory training for new members / refresher for all.	
6	Training and meeting times To explore timing of training and committee meetings to maximise attendance for those with other work commitments.	

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

6.0 Background Documents

6.1 Audit Committee agendas and minutes

TITLE: Bereavement Centre Budget

Committee: Full Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Director Operations

Report No: AA5

Contact Officer: Isabel Edgar Director Operations

Isabel.edgar@estcambs.gov.uk, 01353 616301, The Grange, Ely

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1. To consider the updated Bereavement Centre business case and supporting budget proposal.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. Members are requested to:

- a) Note the updated revenue business case modelling as set out in Appendix 1 [exempt]
- b) Approve a further allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of £4,757,087 for the capital build of the Bereavement Centre
- c) Authorise the Director Finance to secure alternative funding via internal borrowing where CIL is not yet available, in consultation with the Chair of Finance and Assets Committee (as detailed in section 5.5)
- d) Authorise the Director Operations, in consultation with Director Legal, to finalise and enter into the contract between the Council and Contractor A as set out in Appendix 2 [exempt]
- e) Authorise the Director Operations, in consultation with Director Legal, to procure and enter into a contract with an electric cremator provider

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Bereavement Centre project was initiated to investigate the best value for money option for meeting the future demand for cremations and other bereavement services in East Cambridgeshire and as a new potential income stream to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 3.2. An outline business case (OBC) was approved by full Council on 31 July 2020. The OBC set out; alignment to the Council's strategy; a needs analysis and competition appraisal; planning appraisal of the preferred site; site surveys and investigations; development of a financial model for the project; and projected operating costs.
- 3.3. The full business case (FBC) was approved by full Council on 20 February 2024, following a review of:

- The income assumptions and service elements that contribute to the financial revenue model
- A reappraisal of construction costs since the development of the OBC
- Further benchmarking of revenue costs of directly comparable projects

3.4. **Strategic Alignment:** The FBC evidenced that the project will deliver against strategic objectives of the Council by:

- a) Providing better value and easier access to cremations and burial services for residents of East Cambridgeshire and responding to need within the catchment area.
- b) The provision of the Bereavement Centre on the Mepal site will significantly contribute to the Council's wider regeneration and employment generation objective by incrementally creating 6.5 jobs and by ensuring a sustainable end use of an effectively 'brown field' site
- c) Secure and enhance the biodiversity on site, while still allowing for passive recreational use of the site, such as fishing, controlled dog walking and bird watching for the wider community
- d) The project through its design and inclusion of an electric cremator will fit with the Council's vision 2035 target to deliver net zero carbon emissions and protect a key biodiversity and environmental asset in the district
- e) From year two of operation the project could begin to make a significant contribution to support the Council's MTFS

3.5. Following approval of the FBC, a design and project management team was established to finalise the detailed technical design of the Bereavement Centre, complete surveys required on site and progress the project to full procurement of a preferred contractor. Quarterly project progress updates and highlight reports have been presented to the Finance and Assets Committee. An embedded assurance programme has been undertaken by the Council's internal auditor and the project risk register is reviewed by the Risk Management Group. Both of these assurance pieces are reported through to Audit Committee.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSION(S)

4.1. A procurement exercise has now been completed, and a final tendered build cost has been submitted by the preferred Contractor (Appendix 2 Exempt). The final overall project cost is £12,960,617 which is inclusive of:

- Final tendered submission of the build costs, including risk allowance allocation by the Contractor
- Project and Technical Design Team fees and further surveys
- Other Client project costs such as the cremator, ancillary equipment, haulage for reuse of soil held at Portly Hill Depot, procurement
- Risk allowance retained by the Project Team
- Inflation to Q2 2026
- VAT
- Value engineering opportunities that do not impact of the overall look, feel or quality of the Bereavement Centre offer

- All the elements that make up the Bereavement Centre offer as set out in the FBC such as crematorium, wake/function room facility, natural burial area, pet cemetery area, flower court etc
- 4.2. The overall project costs do not include solar PV, over and above the requirements of building regulations. The Project Team has, on two occasions, submitted bids to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for grant funding. Unfortunately, on both occasions the bids were not successful. Feedback is being sought.
- 4.3. The Project Team will continue to research available grants and submit bids, as appropriate. If grant funding can be secured this could offset any future energy costs and provide for a greener service offer. The current build programme does include provision for adequate ducting space to support the installation of solar canopies at a later date, this will allow easy installation with minimal ground works if funding could be secured in the future.
- 4.4. As part of the Procurement process followed, bidders were also required to demonstrate 'social value' returned to the area and community as part of the build process. Contractor A developed a social value offer / return of circa 30% of the overall project cost, with an estimated financial value of circa £2.26m. This includes local job creation, work experience, apprenticeships and training opportunities; use of local supply chains and SME's; community engagement and voluntary hours in the local area.
- 4.5. The final project capital cost has increased from the FBC project budget that was approved by Council in February 2024. However, due to the funding model and application of CIL, the project remains deliverable. The cost increases have been largely driven by the increase in complexity of the final technical design and the construction market conditions.
- 4.6. **Final technical design cost drivers** – During the FBC stage the project had been brought to RIBA stage 2/3 and no detailed technical design had been carried out at that stage, as previously reported to the Finance and Assets Committee. The technical design (RIBA stage 4) has identified that:
- More groundworks and landscaping have been required due to the topography, ecology and ground conditions, additional ecologically safe drainage solutions etc
 - The detailed mechanical and electrical design has identified additional requirements for items such as ventilation and cooling, complexity around utilities connections (substation), increased plant room requirements
 - Additional requirements resulting from building regulations such as the addition of a changing places facility
 - Additional surveys have been required as many had expired, or there have been changes to the ecology at Mepal, that required further investigation
- 4.7. **Construction market conditions cost drivers** – Since both the outline business case and the full business were approved, an AECOM market conditions report

for 2023 and 2024 states the construction industry has experienced significant and sustained inflationary pressures, with two main phases of cost escalation:

- 2020 – 2023: A period of steep increases in both supply input and tender prices, driven by COVID-19 disruption, Britain exiting the EU, global supply chain volatility, and the Ukraine conflict
- 2023–2024/25: While there has been some temporary moderation, underlying inflationary pressures remain — particularly economic instability, increasing materials costs such as structural steel/base metals, supply and specialist trade costs. Recent data indicates renewed upward momentum in cost in Q2 2025, with cost pressures re-emerging amid tight contractor capacity and rising global demand

4.8. Therefore, indicative accumulative inflationary uplifts (since the OBC and FBC were approved) based on actual tender submissions over the past 5 year period have been:

- 2020 to 2023: Construction cost inflation of approx. 25–30%
- 2023 to present: Additional 5–10%, depending on trades and procurement timing
- For a structural steel-intensive project (such as the Bereavement Centre) in Cambridgeshire the total uplift since 2020 is therefore likely to sit within the range of 30–40%, factoring in direct inflation, market risk premiums, specialist trade capacity and a supply pressure in the employment market.

4.9. It is reasonable to conclude that any build project undertaken at the Mepal site would be subject to both market conditions cost pressures and carry embedded costs due to the complexity of the site itself.

4.10. In February 2024 the Council approved the Bereavement Centre budget and at this time it was estimated at £9.06m. Further information is provided in the finance section 5.3.

4.11. The revenue model has also been reviewed in April 2025 to ensure that the current costs and market conditions are reflected in any potential future income and further details are provide in finance section 5.6 and Appendix 1.

4.12. The delivery timescales for the Bereavement Centre are still being refined, however it is expected that the centre will be opened by Summer 2026. To achieve this date a number of assumptions are built into the overall timeline, including procurement of the cremator with immediate effect following the decision by Council (due to their being a long lead in times for orders) and entering into the contract with the building Contractor during May, to enable mobilisation on site by the end of June.

4.13. The project team have therefore been working actively on both the procurement and specification for the cremator and negotiation of terms and conditions for the build contract to align with the overall delivery programme and is in a position to progress if Council approves the project to be taken forward.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND IMPACTS

Financial Implications YES	Legal Implications YES	Human Resources (HR) Implications YES
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) NO	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) YES	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) NO

Financial Implications

- 5.1. **Application of CIL:** In July 2020 Council approved the inclusion of the project on the CIL infrastructure list. As the Bereavement Centre is community infrastructure, it is recommended that the Council use CIL to fund the entire capital costs of the build. This will ensure that the future operation and income generation is not fettered by any borrowing costs.
- 5.2. A total CIL allocation of £12,960,617 is therefore required to complete the project.
- 5.3. In February 2025 Council approved an allocation of £8,203,530 to the Bereavement Centre from CIL. A further allocation from CIL of £4,757,087 is now required and if approved will be met from the 'other' pot detailed in the updated and approved governance arrangements. As of 8 May 2025 the CIL funds available from the 'other' pot stand at £1,434,281. The value of invoices raised is currently £8,097,745, of which £4,048,872 will benefit the 'other' pot once received.
- 5.4. The cashflow of CIL receipts (the £8,097,745 referenced above), shows that at the point of opening the facility in Summer 2026 there will be a deficit of approximately £737,000 and this is purely related to the timing of payments. It should be noted that the assumptions of the value of the 'other' pot do not include any demand notices raised after 8 May 2025 and it is highly likely that the 'other' pot will continue to grow. Additionally, as is typical with capital build projects a fee is retained for defects following handover of the building to the Council. Therefore, this time delay in funding is low risk to the Council.
- 5.5. To mitigate the potential time delay of receipt of CIL or if the CIL 'other pot' does not reach the required level of funding (at any point in the build) then the project will be funded from internal borrowing, as had been agreed previously by Council in February 2024, until such time the CIL money is in the Councils bank account.
- 5.6. **Revenue Business case:** The detailed financial projections for the project including all the income streams are contained in Appendix 1. These detailed financial projections highlight the following:
 - i. The financial projections are prudent, and the project is not predicated on achieving ambitious levels of income.

- ii. The importance of the income streams from natural burials and memorialisation and other crematorium income to support the viability of the project.
 - iii. The operating costs have been rigorously researched to ensure robustness and comparable to other Crematorium/Burial operations.
- 5.7. Although not built into the financial model a further saving will be made by not having to provide additional security measures on site of £11,400 per annum.
- 5.8. Central to the business case for the Bereavement Centre has been an investment appraisal for the project. As set out in Appendix 1 the revenue financial model has been updated to reflect increasing costs and market changes. The financial model assumes fees and charges are set slightly below direct market competition, however, increase by CPI over the operating life in line with fees and charges in the marketplace. Only evidenced and quantifiable income lines are included in the baseline income assumptions.
- 5.9. Appendix 1 sets out the 10 year trading summary following the review. Key movements include an increase in costs by CPI, inclusion of a modest income from the function room facility, reduction in fees relating to burials following further benchmarking of natural burials in the eastern region, small increase in costs of cremations in line with the fees and charges of nearby crematoriums and no movement across all other income streams.
- 5.10. Using CIL rather than borrowing reduces any financial risks of the future operation of the Bereavement Centre. As previously reported to Council in February 2024, the financial model demonstrates that the project moves into surplus in year two of the operation. However, there have been some minor changes to the 10 year trading position following the review described above.
- 5.11. Between years 2-10 of operating the Bereavement Centre the average net revenue return to the Council is circa £325k per year. Year one of operation will lead to a deficit of £192k as the business builds and establishes market position. Overall, the net income for the Council is £2.92m (years 2-10) compared to net income of £2.98m for the same period when the FBC was reported to Council in February 2024.
- 5.12. If the Council do not wish to pursue the build of the Bereavement Centre all monies spent to date cannot be capitalised. Spend to date since the start of the project in 2019 is £1,597,962 (excl. VAT) of which £417,407 has already been accounted for as revenue. Therefore, a further £1,180,555 of revenue expenditure would need to be included within the first year of the MTFS period.

Legal Implications

- 5.13. Following the procurement process using the national framework 'Procure Partnerships', the council is required to enter into a JCT (Joint Contracts Tribunal) Design and Build Contract with the successful contractor. The terms and conditions for the contract are in a standard form and will commit the Council to the build programme. The cost returned through the tender is a fixed price,

however as with all contracts of this nature does make provision for exceptional circumstances but remains low risk.

Human Resources Implications

- 5.14. The development of the Bereavement Centre will involve setting up a new service within the Council. The business case assumes a total of 6.5 new roles within the service. Ahead of the opening day of the Bereavement Centre, the majority of these roles will need to be recruited to and in place to ensure that all IT systems are configured, cremator commissioning complete, processes are designed, and marketing of the service can start ahead of accepting our first cremations or burials. It is likely therefore that recruitment will begin in Autumn 2025 for staff to be brought on board during early 2026, based on an assumed opening date of Summer 2026.
- 5.15. **Equality Impact Assessment** - Central to the development of the project has been the principle that all communities and neighbourhoods within the district should have equal access to services, and that potential disadvantage and social exclusion should be proactively addressed.
- 5.16. The location of the proposed Bereavement Centre will to a greater degree challenge the current “market share” of the dominant private sector in the north of the district, which is keeping charges high against the public sector provider in the south of Cambridgeshire. Consequently, a new facility at Mepal will offer fundamentally better value for money in the marketplace for residents in the centre and north of the district, as well as provide a value for money alternative for residents within the south of the district should they wish to use services within East Cambridgeshire.
- 5.17. The Bereavement Centre is a multi-faith and non-faith facility that can provide an appropriate suite of services for wide community use, including burials, cremations, witnessed cremations, direct cremations, ash scattering and memorialisation.
- 5.18. **Carbon Impact Assessment** – The carbon impact assessment has shown that overall, this proposal will have a negative impact on carbon emissions arising as a consequence of (a) the embodied carbon arising at the construction stage, (b) car travel to the site and (c) (at least in the short term) the on-going operation of the building. These impacts would occur with the majority of new build projects.
- 5.19. However, the ambition is to minimise emissions through renewable energy generation on site, efficient building design, provision of EV charging, and where possible reuse of existing ground works from the previous building/parking.
- 5.20. In addition, as the cremator is being run on an all-electric (rather than gas) basis it means the building is capable of easy adaptation to net zero operation once the UK national grid is decarbonised, and any negative effects from travelling to the site will also be reduced once the majority of cars are electric based. Theoretically, once operating, and under a decarbonised national grid scenario, the site could become a negative net emitter (i.e. it captures more carbon than it emits) as a

consequence of careful management of the site, including tree planting and sensitive management of the natural environment.

- 5.21. Negative aspects could be minimised further by reviewing the building materials used on site and using lower embodied carbon content, where practical to do so. This will be considered as part of the detailed design phase of the project.

6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Revenue Business Case modelling [Exempt]

Appendix 2 – Tender Summary [Exempt]

Background Documents:

Crematorium Outline Business Case 31 July 2020– Full Council

Planning Application and Permission Information - August 2021

Bereavement Centre Full Business Case 20 February 2024 – Full Council

Bereavement Centre Project Highlight report 26 September 2024 - Finance and Assets

Bereavement Centre Project Highlight report 30 January 2025 - Finance and Assets

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority:
Membership and Other Appointments**

Meeting: Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Chief Executive

1.0 Issue

- 1.1 This report requests the Council to make appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2025/26.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to make the following appointments/nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2025/26:
- (a) appoint the Leader of Council to act as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority and one substitute member.
 - (b) nominate two members from the Conservative party to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and two substitute members from the same political parties as those appointed;
 - (c) nominate one member from the Conservative party to the Audit and Governance Committee and one substitute member from the same political party.
- 2.2 That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, if the political balance is amended by the Combined Authority between now and the next Council meeting.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, each Constituent Council must appoint one of its elected members and a substitute member to the Combined Authority. Each Council made these appointments at its respective Council meeting in May 2017 for the 2017/18 municipal year and is requested to do so for each subsequent municipal year. The Council is now asked to appoint members and substitute members for the municipal year 2025/26.

Non-Executive Committees

- 3.2 The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2016 requires the Combined Authority to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. The Order sets out the rules for membership. The membership of the Overview and Scrutiny and the Audit Committees as a whole should reflect, so far as reasonably practicable, the balance of political parties of the constituent councils when taken together. The balance is based on membership of political parties, not political groups, on constituent councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 3.3 On 1 May 2025, there were elections at Cambridgeshire County Council as well as East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and Peterborough City Council. The Combined Authority has reviewed the political balance on constituent councils and has requested constituent councils to make the following appointments to these committees.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.4 The Combined Authority agreed that to ensure an equitable representation across each constituent authority, two members from each council should be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, representing a total membership of fourteen members.
- 3.5 The implications of applying political proportionality to a fourteen-member Overview and Scrutiny Committee are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The Council is required to nominate two members from the Conservative Party to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 based on the political balance set out in Appendix 1.

Audit and Governance Committee

- 3.7 The Combined Authority agreed to establish an Audit and Governance Committee consisting of seven constituent members: one member from each constituent council.
- 3.8 The implications of applying political proportionality to a seven-member Audit and Governance Committee are detailed in Appendix 2. The Council is required to nominate one member from the Conservative party to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 based on the political balance set out in Appendix 2.

Substitute members

- 3.9 The Combined Authority has agreed that substitute members should be appointed for each position on the Audit and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any substitute members should come from the same party as the Member they are substituting for to maintain political balance.
- 3.10 For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if constituent councils have appointed members from the same political parties, those Councils might only wish to appoint one substitute rather than two. The quorum set down in legislation is two-thirds of the total membership. Therefore, it is preferable to appoint two members in case both members are absent from a meeting and need to substitute.

Conclusion

- 3.11 All appointments and nominations made by constituent councils will be reported to the Combined Authority's annual meeting on 4 June 2025.
- 3.12 The political balance calculations in the Appendices are based on up-to-date statistics given by constituent councils and take account of the outcome of the local elections that took place on 1 May 2025. However, there may be last-minute changes in the lead up to constituent councils' annual meetings and the Combined Authority's annual meeting on 4 June 2025
- 3.13 If there are consequential changes to the overall political balance, the Combined Authority may need to review the membership and the allocation of seats to political parties on the above committees. The Monitoring Officer will advise constituent councils if any subsequent changes have been necessary, and whether any changes need to be made to their nominations.
- 3.14 If there is no provision in the constituent council's standing orders, the Council may wish to consider giving delegated powers for the Chief Executive to approve any consequential changes to these appointments in consultation with the relevant Party Group leaders.

4.0 Financial Implications/ Quality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, no remuneration is to be payable by the Combined Authority to its members.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 These are set out in the report. The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2016 requires a combined authority to ensure that the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the constituent councils when taken together.

6.0 Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee political balance calculations.
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Audit and Governance Committee political balance calculations
- 6.3 Accessible versions of the appendices are available on request from Democratic.Services@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

7.0 Background Documents

- 7.1 None

Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Fourteen
POLITICAL BALANCE ACROSS THE COUNTY as at 2 May 2025

	Total	Liberal Democrat	% of total	Conservative	% of total	Labour	% of total	Green Party	% of total	Peterborough First	% of total	Reform	% of total	Total not counted	Total Counted	Entitlement
CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY	2	31	52.5	10	16.9	5	8.5	3	5.1	0	0.0	10.0	16.9	2	59	2 Lib Dem
CAMBRIDGE CITY	2	12	28.6	1	2.4	24	57.1	5	11.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	42	1 Lab, 1 Green
EAST CAMBS.	2	0	0.0	14	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14	14	2 Con
FENLAND	2	2	5.4	35	94.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6	37	2 Con
HUNTINGDONSHIRE	2	11	31.4	19	54.3	4	11.4	1	2.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17	35	1 Con, 1 Lib Dem
PETERBOROUGH	2	8	14.8	11	20.4	17	31.5	5	9.3	13	24.1	0.0	0.0	6	54	1 Lab, 1 Peterborough First
SOUTH CAMBS.	2	35	81.4	8	18.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	43	2 Liberal Democrat
TOTAL	14	99		98		50		14		13		10.0		47	284	
POLITICAL BALANCE %		34.86		34.51		17.61		4.93		4.58		3.52				
Seat allocation		5		5		2		1		1		0			14	
Committee seat allocation	14	4.88		4.83		2.46		0.69		0.64		0.49				

Audit and Governance Committee of Seven
POLITICAL BALANCE ACROSS THE COUNTY as at 2 May 2025

	Total	Liberal Democrat	% of total	Conservative	% of total	Labour	% of total	Green Party	% of total	Peterborough First	% of total	Reform	% of total	Total not counted	Total Counted	Entitlement
CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY	1	31	52.5	10	16.9	5	8.5	3	5.1	0	0.0	10.0	16.9	2	59	1 Liberal Democrat
CAMBRIDGE CITY	1	12	28.6	1	2.4	24	57.1	5	11.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	42	1 Labour
EAST CAMBS.	1	0	0.0	14	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14	14	1 Conservative
FENLAND	1	2	5.4	35	94.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6	37	1 Conservative
HUNTINGDONSHIRE	1	11	31.4	19	54.3	4	11.4	1	2.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17	35	1 Liberal Democrat
PETERBOROUGH	1	8	14.8	11	20.4	17	31.5	5	9.3	13	24.1	0.0	0.0	6	54	1 Conservative
SOUTH CAMBS.	1	35	81.4	8	18.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	43	1 Liberal Democrat
TOTAL	7	99		98		50		14		13		10.0		47	284	
POLITICAL BALANCE %		34.86		34.51		17.61		4.93		4.58		3.52				
Seat allocation		2	+1	2	+1	1		0		0				0	6	
Committee seat allocation	7	2.44		2.42		1.23		0.35		0.32		0.25		0		



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Reports from Constituent Council Representatives on the Combined Authority

The following meetings have taken place in February 2025

Combined Authority Board, 6 February 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Combined Authority Board \(February\)](#)

Audit and Governance Committee, 21 February 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Audit and Governance Committee \(February\)](#)

Skills and Employment Committee, 24 February 2025

No ECDC Councillor present

Decision Summary Link: [Skills and Employment Committee \(February\)](#)

Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee, 26 February 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee \(February\)](#)



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Reports from Constituent Council Representatives on the Combined Authority

The following meetings have taken place in March 2025

Transport and Infrastructure Committee, 5 March 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Transport and Infrastructure Committee \(March\)](#)

Investment Committee, 10 March 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Investment Committee \(March\)](#)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12 March 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Overview and Scrutiny Committee \(March\)](#)

Human Resources Committee, 14 March 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Human Resources Committee \(March\)](#)

Combined Authority Board, 19 March 2025

Councillor:

Decision Summary Link: [Combined Authority Board \(March\)](#)

ACTION TAKEN ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY

Committee: Council

Date: 22 May 2025

Author: Democratic Services & Elections Manager

Report No: AA6

Contact Officer:

Jane Webb, Democratic Services & Elections Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk , 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

1.0 ISSUE

- 1.1. To note the action taken on the grounds of urgency.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1. That the action taken on grounds of urgency be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

(a) WENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL – COUNCIL TAX

The Chief Executive implemented changes in relation to the Council Tax request of Wentworth Parish Council.

- 3.1. Wentworth Parish Council at their meeting on the 8th January 2025, agreed a parish precept of £10,500. However, in the paperwork sent to the District Council this figure was incorrectly stated as £20,500. The Council Tax resolution approved by Council included this larger value.
- 3.2. In order to recover this situation, and allow revised Council Tax bills to be issued, Council is asked to amend the Council Tax resolution to show the required precept by Wentworth Parish Council as £10,500. This doesn't impact on any other element of the approved budget.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS / EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT / CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. This has no financial implications on the Council.
- 4.2. Equality Impact Assessment not required for the purposes of this report.

APPENDICES

None

Background Documents:

- (a) Urgent Action Memo dated: 3 April 2025

