

## COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

**Date:** Tuesday, 17th February 2015

**Time:** 10.30 a.m. – 3.20 p.m.

**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillor K Reynolds (Chairman)  
Councillors P Ashcroft, B Ashwood, A Bailey, I Bates, K Bourke, D Brown, P Brown, P Bullen, R Butcher, S Bywater, E Cearns, B Chapman, P Clapp, J Clark, D Connor, S Count, S Crawford, S Criswell, M Curtis, D Divine, P Downes, S Frost, G Gillick, L Harford, D Harty, R Henson, R Hickford, J Hipkin, P Hudson, B Hunt, D Jenkins, G Kenney, S Kindersley, P Lagoda, A Lay, M Leeke, M Loynes, I Manning, M Mason, M McGuire, L Nethsingha, T Orgee, P Reeve, M Rouse, S Rylance, P Sales, J Schumann, J Scutt, M Shellens, M Shuter, M Smith, A Taylor, M Tew, P Topping, S van de Kerkhove, A Walsh, J Whitehead, J Williams, J Wisson and F Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors A Dent, D Giles, N Kavanagh, F Onasanya, J Palmer, P Read, S van de Ven and G Wilson.

### 114. MINUTES – 16TH DECEMBER 2014

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th December 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 115. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made a number of announcements as set out in **Appendix A**.

### 116. REPORT OF THE COUNTY RETURNING OFFICER

Council noted that Councillor Lynda Harford had been elected to fill the vacancy in the Bar Hill electoral division in the by-election held on 12th February 2015.

### 117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman reported that the Monitoring Officer had issued a dispensation relieving all Members from the requirement to disclose interests and the restrictions on participating in the Business Plan debate, contained in the Members' Code of Conduct relating to statutory and non-statutory interests.

The Chairman declared a disclosable statutory interest under the Code of Conduct on behalf of all Members present in relation to Minute 122 (a).

Councillor Bywater declared a non-statutory disclosable interest under the Code of Conduct in relation to Minute 122 (d), as his wife was employed as a nurse at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

### 118. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were received from members of the public.

## **119. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

## **120. ITEM FOR DETERMINATION FROM GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

### **Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals 2015-20**

It was moved by the Chairman of Council and seconded by the Vice-Chairman of the Council and resolved unanimously to suspend any standing orders in connection with the Business Plan debate in order to accommodate a procedure agreed by the Council's Group Leaders.

It was moved by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, Councillor Count, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, Councillor McGuire, that the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee meeting of 27th January 2015 on the Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals 2015-20, as set out in Section 3.1 of Agenda Item 7, including amendments and adjustments summarised in Appendix A of the report be adopted.

Members then debated the Council's Business Plan and the Budget Proposals for 2015/16. In his speech the Leader of the Council and others paid tribute to the hard work undertaken by officers during the Business Plan process, and thanked them for their efforts.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Bullen and seconded by Councillor Reeve:

Delete recommendation 3.1 d) and add

That the Council does not increase the County Council element of the council tax for 2015/16. The element of this proposal not covered by the council tax freeze grant, in the sum of £2.168m can be financed from the additional funding that has arisen since the meeting of the General Purposes Committee in January as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report. The residual amount not covered by this resource, in the sum of £233k, will be funded by a draw on the General Reserve.

Following discussion, the amendment on being put to the vote was lost.

[Voting pattern: UKIP and the Non-Aligned Independent in favour; Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, Independent members against]

Councillor Bourke withdrew an amendment in relation to creating a time-limited disability officer access role following confirmation from the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment that he would find operational savings of up to £20,000 to fund a piece of work for six months, after which the Economy and Environment Committee would review whether it was worth continuing.

The substantive motion, as detailed below, was then put to the vote and carried.

That approval be given:

- a) To the Service/Directorate cash limits as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 4 of the Business Plan.

- b) To a total County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £769,816,000 as set out in Section 3, Table 5.4 of the Business Plan.
- c) To a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £244,398,602.92 (to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995), as set out in Section 3, Table 5.4 of the Business Plan.
- d) To a Council Tax for each Band of property, based on the number of "Band D" equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Councils (213,586.6), as set out in Section 3, Table 5.5 of the Business Plan reflecting a 1.99% increase in the County Council element of the Council Tax:

Band	Ratio	Amount (£)
A	6/9	762.84
B	7/9	889.98
C	8/9	1,017.12
<b>D</b>	<b>9/9</b>	<b>1,144.26</b>
E	11/9	1,398.54
F	13/9	1,652.82
G	15/9	1,907.10
H	18/9	2,288.52

- e) To the report of the Chief Finance Officer on the levels of reserves and robustness of the estimates as set out in Section 3 of the Business Plan.
- f) To the Capital Strategy as set out in Section 7 of the Business Plan.
- g) To the capital expenditure in 2015-16 up to £218.7m arising from:
  - Commitments from schemes already approved; and
  - The consequences of new starts in 2015-16 shown in summary in Section 3, Table 5.10 of the Business Plan.
- h) To the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Section 8 of the Business Plan.
- i) To the Prudential Borrowing Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 3 of Section 8 of the Business Plan.

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 requires the Council to record in the minutes immediately after any vote is taken at a budget decision meeting the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting. The voting record is attached at Appendix B.

## 121. **NARROWING THE GAP IN DEPRIVATION LEVELS ACROSS THE COUNTY - SERVICE COMMITTEE INDICATORS**

It was moved by the Chairman of the Council and seconded by the Vice-Chairman of the Council and resolved unanimously:

That Council note:

- a) progress made since the motion was passed;
- b) the indicators agreed by Service Committees; and
- c) any suggestion by Council to change or amend particular deprivation performance indicators would need to be considered and agreed by the respective Services Committee.

## **122. MOTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10**

Four motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

### **a) Motion from Councillor Paul Bullen**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Bullen and seconded by Councillor Bywater.

The council believes that:

- It will be increasingly difficult to balance the budget for future years without a significant increase in grant funding, a rise in Council Tax above 1.99%, the identification of additional savings or the creation of additional revenue streams;
- Public service organisations in Cambridgeshire have responded to the enormous financial challenges faced over the past several years in an innovative and responsible manner. However significant funding shortfalls and continued pressure on public sector budgets persist, and at some point these financial pressures will inevitably have an impact on the ability of local government organisations to deliver good quality and safe services to the residents of Cambridgeshire;
- It is therefore in the public interest to explore all possible areas where savings can be made and it is the responsibility of Elected Members to ensure that council tax payers do not pay for services which are neither required nor justified.

The council notes that:

- Between April 2013 and March 2014 this council spent £2,385.63 on providing free tea and coffee in the Members' Lounge and that this figure does not include monies spent during June and October 2013 as the expenditure for these months is currently unavailable. Therefore, it is probable that the total expenditure was in the region of £2810.76;
- During the same period, this council spent £3,612.24 on the provision of free tea and coffee to members who were attending meetings;
- The total expenditure, during the period April 2013 to March 2014, on providing free tea and coffee to Elected Members was in the region of £6423.00;

- The total expenditure on the provision of free tea and coffee to Elected Members for the Financial Year 2014 to 2015 is expected to be significantly more than that for the Financial Year 2013 to 2014;
- In the current financial situation, all Local Authorities are finding it harder to provide essential care services to their residents who need them and that all possible additional savings should be explored;
- Northamptonshire County Council does not provide free tea and coffee to elected members during meetings;
- Free tea and coffee is not provided to staff or contractors of this council whilst at their place of work.

This Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to:

- Stop the provision of free tea and coffee to Elected Members of this council and to use the funds saved for the provision of Care Services to the people of Cambridgeshire;
- Investigate the provision of a 'cost free' vending machine to be installed in the Members' Lounge so that members are able to purchase beverages if they so desire.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Whitehead and Seconded by Councillor Van de Kerkhove (deletions struck through and additions in bold).

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- ~~—— Stop the provision of free tea and coffee to Elected Members of this council and to use the funds saved for the provision of Care Services to the people of Cambridgeshire;~~
- ~~—— Investigate the provision of a 'cost free' vending machine to be installed in the Members' Lounge so that members are able to purchase beverages if they so desire.~~

**This Council calls on the Chief Executive to:-**

- **Stop the provision of free tea and coffee for those attending meetings in Shire Hall unless those calling the meeting are prepared to pay for it.**
- **To continue to provide tea and coffee in the members' lounge using the current arrangements but to charge members £4 per month, deducted from their allowance, to cover the costs of this service.**

Following discussion, the amendment on being put to the vote was lost.

[Voting pattern: Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat, 2 UKIP, 2 Independents in favour; Conservatives, some Liberal Democrats, Most UKIP, and the Non-Aligned Independent against; 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Independent abstained]

Following further discussion, the substantive motion on being put to the vote was lost.

[Voting pattern: Most UKIP, 2 Liberal Democrats in favour; Conservatives, Most Liberal Democrats, 2 Independents and the Non-Aligned Independent against; 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 UKIP, 3 Labour and 1 Independent abstained]

**b) Motion from Councillor John Hipkin**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Hipkin and seconded by Councillor Yeulett:

As confirmation of its continuing commitment to the redevelopment of Fenland communities this Council welcomes the recent publication of Connecting North Cambridgeshire: Infrastructure for Growth which has been endorsed by Leaders of Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council as well as the MP for North East Cambridgeshire, Stephen Barclay. The proposals in the publication are to be commended not only for the benefits they would bring to Wisbech as a result of strategic improvements to transport infrastructure but also for what they would do to ease some of the current development pressures on the city of Cambridge.

This Council calls for the wide dissemination of the document and for the urgent implementation of the measures it calls for.

Following discussion, the motion, on being put to the vote, was carried unanimously.

**c) Motion from Councillor Sandra Crawford**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Crawford and seconded by Councillor Scutt:

This Council notes:

- That the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is currently being negotiated between the US and the EU supposedly to pursue the interest of free trade.
- TTIP negotiations are being conducted behind closed doors between representatives of the EU and US without transparency or democratic accountability.
- TTIP would open up access to government procurement markets and eliminate preferential treatment to local suppliers and introduce investment protection provisions that include investor state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms which allow investors to challenge state actions which they perceive as threatening to their investment. The biggest example for the UK is the marketization of the NHS and Social care. This would open services to US corporations, and limit local democratic choice. Corporations perceiving a loss to their profits or even future profits could challenge decisions which do not allow them to invest in the local markets.
- The potential implications of TTIP with respect to Cambridgeshire, affects democratic decisions relating to procurement for social and public services. Cambridgeshire County Farms are subject to EU laws and are also vulnerable to the implications of TTIP regulations.
- ISDS mechanisms allow for disputes between investors and governments to be heard by tribunals of “experts” – corporate lawyers rather than

resolved by the host state's courts, and conducted in private. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recently explained that "foreign investors have recently used ISDS claims to challenge measures adopted by states in the public interest (for example, policies to promote social equity, foster environmental protection or protect public health).

This Council believes that:

- The TTIP negotiations are potentially catastrophic for Cambridgeshire public services as the EU/US representatives are negotiating to hand over the right to regulate in the public interest without transparency or accountability to their electorates.
- ISDS mechanisms would make it hard for any government to reverse liberalisation and privatisation without being sued by foreign investors, or to make choices for local businesses to thrive, as foreign businesses would have equal rights to invest. So whatever voters actually wanted, the trade treaty would place major barriers in the way of government giving expression to their democratic will. This could make any democratic changes to the NHS impossible. US corporations will be able to invest in local services, and sue the state for any local decisions which hinder their investment. This impacts on Local government procurement choices.
- ISDS threatens the right of local government departments to encourage buying locally, ethically or in order to promote disadvantaged suppliers. It is therefore detrimental to local entrepreneurs. ISDS threatens the local environment – regulations placed on companies could be difficult to enforce regarding pollution or other detrimental effects, as corporations could sue the state for loss of profit. In some authorities, this could be caused by chemical leakage into a river, fracking or pollution. In Cambridgeshire this could affect farming, as regulations on GM crops and various growth hormones will be harmonized with the US.

This Council resolves:

- To call upon the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills, the MPs representing Cambridgeshire and all regional MEPs raising our serious concerns about the developing TTIP, the secretiveness of its process and its potential impact on public services, social and environmental protection, financial regulation and basic democratic oversight.
- To call upon the Chief Executive to write to the Local Government Association to urge them to lobby on behalf of all Local Authorities on the potential impact of the TTIP.
- To publicise the council's concern/opposition to TTIP amongst local residents and workplaces.

Following discussion, the motion, on being put to the vote, was lost.

[Voting pattern: UKIP and Labour in favour; Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and



2 Independents against; 1 Independent abstained]

**d) Motion from Councillor Paul Sales**

Councillor Sales withdrew the following motion:

There has been widespread public concern within the County about the future of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

Circle Health Care took over responsibility for operating Hinchingsbrooke Health Care Trust (HHCT) through a ten year franchise arrangement with effect from 1st February 2012.

The management of Circle came before the County's Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st March 2012 when their hospital business plan was considered.

The overall plan was to run the hospital at a profit with a view to paying off the historic £40m debt over the lifetime of the ten year franchise and also to make the hospital a 'world class' small general hospital.

Various commitments were made by Circle in that meeting and are recorded in the minutes. Significantly the then head of Circle's business development said that 'Circle would remain committed (to the hospital), and had made a commitment that Hinchingsbrooke would never make a loss'. (Page 4, 4th paragraph).

The business plan also included £928k of unidentified savings which the members queried.

This was a challenging meeting for Circle and members were concerned that the financial arrangements were not viable.

The scrutiny committee was very concerned about the contractual details and asked for a copy of the franchise agreement. This took a long time to arrive and was of little use in determining Circle's specific responsibilities and undertakings because it was heavily redacted on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

On 5th February 2013 Circle again appeared before the Scrutiny committee.

The minutes show that:

The fourth paragraph on page 1 notes that the overspend for the year would be greater than projected.

On page 2, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6, significant details of the franchise agreement emerged which we were not aware of previously. i.e. that Circle were required to meet losses only up to a certain amount, that the contract contained a get out clause, and the £40m historic debt was frozen. (No mention here of interest on this sum)

Much other detail has subsequently come to light and Circle Health Care pulled out of the franchise at the end of January this year.

The circumstances surrounding Circle's involvement with Hinchingsbrooke Hospital have been examined by the government's Public Accounts Committee and were

heavily criticised.

It has been announced that the Hospital will return to NHS management but no detailed arrangements have so far emerged.

I call upon Council to write to the Secretary of State:

- a) Expressing this authority's concern about the franchising exercise and the subsequent impact on the quality of services offered by the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.
- b) Requesting that detailed future plans for the management of the Hospital should be clarified and made explicit as a matter of urgency and that, as the Authority responsible for scrutinising the NHS in Cambridgeshire, we should be involved.
- c) That due to our previous involvement in scrutinising the franchising process this Authority should be involved in an investigation to determine what went wrong.

## **123. QUESTIONS**

### **a) Oral Questions**

Six questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9.1, as set out in **Appendix C**.

In response to these questions, the following item was agreed for further action:

- In response to a question from Councillor Reeve, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Count, agreed to provide a full written response regarding the reduction in the number of uniformed police since 2010.

### **b) Written Questions**

One written question had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2, as set out in **Appendix D**.

Chairman

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 17TH FEBRUARY 2015  
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS****PEOPLE****Former County Councillor Lister Wilson**

It is with regret that the Chairman reports the recent death of former County Councillor Lister Wilson. Lister Wilson served on the County Council from 2001 until 2005, representing the Gamlingay Division, on behalf of the Conservative Party, and from 2005 until 2013 representing the Bourn Division, on behalf of the Conservative Group, Conservative (Cambridgeshire Alliance Group), an Independent and then the UKIP Group. The Council's thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues at this very sad time.

**Former County Councillor Michael Ogden**

It is with regret that the Chairman reports the recent death of former County Councillor Michael Ogden who represented the March West Division on behalf of the Conservatives until standing down in 2009 after 36 years' service as a county councillor. Following his retirement he was appointed an honorary alderman in recognition of his long service. The Council's thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues at this very sad time.

**Anne Richardson**

The Chairman reports with enormous sadness the death of Anne Richardson who worked as a Development and Implementation Manager in Commissioning Enhanced Services, Children, Families and Adults. The Council's thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues at this very sad time.

**Bar Hill By-Election**

The result from the By-Election held on 12th February 2015 for the Bar Hill Electoral Division was:

Name	Description	Votes Cast
HALE, Martin John	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	251
HARFORD, Lynda	The Conservative Party Candidate	787 Elected
ROLAND, Claudia	The Green Party	200
SMITH, Alexander	Labour Party Candidate	235
WHELAN, Fiona Elizabeth	Liberal Democrat	238

The turnout was 23.64%, total number of votes was 1711, included within the total were 0 rejected ballot papers.

Lynda Harford was declared as the duly elected candidate for the Bar Hill Division and has signed her declaration of acceptance.

## **SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Tour of Cambridgeshire**

It has recently been announced that Cambridgeshire will host Britain's first-ever Gran Fondo as part of a two-day cycling extravaganza in June 2015. The Tour of Cambridgeshire will comprise a time trial on Saturday June 6, followed by an 83-mile Gran Fondo, which is a mass-participation event, on Sunday 7th June. Both events will start and finish at the Peterborough Arena but will pass through the northern districts of Cambridgeshire. Officers are working with the event organisers to help minimise any potential disruption for local people and businesses. Officers from Cambridgeshire County Council will also be working with district colleagues to look at the opportunities the race brings in terms of cycling legacy, community participation and economic development.

## **MESSAGES**

### **Former Councillor John Reynolds**

The total amount raised in John Reynolds' memory at the Carol Singing session held on 16 December, and from other donations received in the days following that was £293.67. A cheque was sent to The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

# COUNTY COUNCIL – VOTE ON BUDGET 17 FEBRUARY 2015

# APPENDIX B

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent/No Vote	COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent/No Vote
ASHCROFT P	UKIP	✓				KINDERSLEY S G M	LibD	✓			
ASHWOOD B	LibD	✓				LAGODA P	Ind NA	✓			
BAILEY	Con	✓				LAY A	UKIP		✓		
BATES I C	Con	✓				LEEKE M	LibD	✓			
BOURKE K	LibD		✓			LOYNES M	Con	✓			
BROWN D	Con	✓				MANNING I	LibD	✓			
BROWN P	Con	✓				MASON M	Ind			✓	
BULLEN P	UKIP		✓			MCGUIRE L W	Con	✓			
BUTCHER R	Con	✓				NETHSINGHA L	LibD			✓	
BYWATER S	UKIP		✓			ONASANYA F	Lab				A
CEARNS E	LibD	✓				ORGE A G	Con	✓			
CHAPMAN B	Con	✓				PALMER J	Con				A
CLAPP P	UKIP		✓			READ P	Con				A
CLARK J	Con	✓				REEVE P	UKIP		✓		
CONNOR D	Con	✓				REYNOLDS K A	Con	✓			
COUNT S	Con	✓				ROUSE M	Con	✓			
CRAWFORD S	Lab			✓		RYLANCE S	UKIP		✓		
CRISWELL S J	Con	✓				SALES P	Lab			✓	
CURTIS M	Con	✓				SCHUMANN J	Con	✓			
DENT A	Con				A	SCUTT J	Lab			✓	
DIVINE D	UKIP		✓			SHELLENS M	LibD	✓			
DOWNES P J	LibD	✓				SHUTER M G	Con	✓			
FROST S	Con	✓				SMITH M	Con	✓			
GILES D	Ind				A	TAYLOR A	LibD	✓			
GILLICK G	UKIP		✓			TEW M	UKIP		✓		
HARFORD L	Con	✓				TOPPING P	Cons	✓			
HARTY D	Con	✓				VAN DE KERKHOVE S	Ind	✓			
HENSON R	UKIP		✓			VAN DE VEN S	LibD				A
HICKFORD R	Con	✓				WALSH A	Lab			✓	
HIPKIN J	Ind	✓				WHITEHEAD J	Lab			✓	
HUDSON P	Con	✓				WILLIAMS J	LibD	✓			
HUNT W T I	Con	✓				WILSON G	LibD				A
JENKINS D	LibD	✓				WISSON J	Con	✓			
KAVANAGH N	Lab				A	YEULETT F H	Con	✓			
KENNEY G	Con	✓				TOTAL		43	11	7	0

## **Appendix C**

### **COUNTY COUNCIL – 17TH FEBRUARY 2015**

#### **ORAL QUESTION TIME**

Unfortunately due to a technical problem at the Council meeting the audio from Members' Oral Question Time was not captured. It has therefore not been possible to produce a verbatim record as usual. This Appendix is therefore based on a summary of the brief Democratic Services Officer's notes of this item.

#### **1. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count, from Councillor E Cearns**

This related to a previous Council motion regarding investigating possible alternative future governance arrangements. Councillor Cearns queried why the investigation had not progressed beyond Group Leaders.

#### **Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count**

He explained that the motion had instructed the Chief Executive only to investigate. It was noted that the Chief Executive had been in consultation with a large number of outside bodies including the Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, and District Councils. There had as yet been no uniform agreement on the way forward. General Purposes Committee had established a Member Working Group which would be working hard with officers and partners to progress this issue.

#### **2. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count, from Councillor L Nethsingha**

Councillor Nethsingha queried why the Greater Cambridge Executive Board had ignored the recommendations of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Joint Assembly regarding some cycling schemes.

#### **Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count**

In response, he indicated that she had been given incorrect information. He explained that the Assembly had provided a list of projects with a value of £180m against a budget of £100m without a list of specific recommendations. The Executive Board had then been asked to prioritise schemes accordingly.

#### **3. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count, from Councillor M Leeke**

Councillor Leeke asked the Leader of the Council whether he was as surprised as he was that devolution proposals for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had been discussed at a County Councils' Network meeting before they had been discussed by the Council's Group Leaders.

#### **Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count**

In response, he indicated that he was not surprised, as the invitation for dialogue had been sent to many organisations including Peterborough City Council, who were actively involved in ongoing discussions. Nothing had yet been brought back at the current time, as there were still no agreed proposals.

**4. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count, from Councillor P Reeve**

This question asked whether he would join him in his concerns regarding the substantial reduction in uniformed police in the County since 2010.

**Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count**

In response he indicated that as he did not have the relevant statistics to hand, he would therefore provide a written answer outside of the meeting.

**5. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count from Councillor A Walsh**

This question related to reassurance that the recent decision by General Purposes Committee in relation to Estover Playing Fields did not represent a change of position as a result of any pressure that might have been exerted from UKIP.

**Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor S Count**

In response, the Leader of the Council set out details of the valuation of the fields which had been received and the external funding identified for sports facilities. This demonstrated that General Purposes Committee had analysed the options and had then made a democratic decision on the facts provided, in order to obtain the best deal for the Council.

During his response, the Leader of the Council said he had received an e-mail in January from the Leader of the UKIP Group indicating that UKIP had changed its stance and stating UKIP could build 250 houses on the site. In response to this, the UKIP leader Councillor Bullen stated that he had never sent any such email and challenged the Leader of the Council to produce it. The Leader of the Council indicated that he would be happy to do so. The Chairman advised the Leader of the Council and the Leader of UKIP to resolve the issue outside of the meeting.

**6. Question to the Chairwoman of the Children and Young People Committee Councillor J Whitehead from Councillor Barry Chapman**

Councillor Chapman highlighted the level of growth planned in Phases 1 and 2 in St Neots which included 1500 houses in Phase 1 and the same number for Phase 2. He then raised concerns regarding current plans to accommodate the additional children from these new developments within the existing two secondary schools. He asked if the Chairwoman of Children and Young People could take back his concerns to the Children and Young People Committee and ask it to consider reviewing the required secondary school provision.

**Response from the Chairwoman of the Children and Young People Committee, Councillor J Whitehead**

She indicated that as a result of concerns on this issue as already raised, the Head of 0-19 Planning and Organisation and her team were currently reviewing pupil projections and together with Councillor Chapman, she was due to meet them next week to be updated on progress.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015  
WRITTEN QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.2

Question from Councillor Mike Mason

"I refer Councillor Bates to the email sent to Chairman and Members of Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee at their meeting on 10th February. Does he agree with the reasoning outlined in paragraphs 2 - 5 in that email? If he does not agree, will he please indicate in the reply the areas of disagreement and the reasons for any decision taken at Committee.

2. The report recommendation and the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is not in accordance with previously established council policy, the aims of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB) project, including its finance, implementation and operation. It should therefore, in my opinion, have been advertised and treated as a **KEY DECISION**, once the detailed finances had been determined.
3. **Financial Considerations.** Capital finance of the CGB project **included the cost of providing the two surfaced Park and Ride sites with access roads, lighting, toilets, control and operational maintenance infrastructure etc.** On two occasions when **publicly questioning** Councillor Bates at **Council** he has informed me (his words), that the **operation of the Busway is cost neutral to the Council. He explained that operating costs were covered out of revenue by the access charges paid by the Bus Operators.** In reply to a written question he indicated that these charges in the first year of operation were, **(from memory, around £580,000 per annum).** Thus the recommendation would represent **a departure from established policy** and financial operation of the Busway. **At paragraph 4.1** the report seems to imply that total implementation of ticketing, access and enforcement costs would now be transferred to another budget (presumably Passenger Transport). Does this imply that all other operational costs and revenues will be similarly treated? Members and the travelling public need to be very clearly informed about this. My reasoning follows this line :- Car Parks at St. Ives and Longstanton have hitherto been treated as Busway Assets. If the Council were ultimately to introduce some method of charging for the use of these, then any revenue benefit should be transparent and be applied to a CGB operational budget. I am not personally aware that such a **budget document exists publicly** but in the interests of openness and transparency the Council cannot and should not have it both ways.
4. **Public Perception and Value for Money.** The facilities at Longstanton Park and Ride include a new "Eco" building with heated indoor waiting area, with Real Time Information screens covering CGB and connecting bus services, seating, public/staff toilets and an information point/office. RTI is of course no good if passengers cannot access it when the building is closed. (Huntingdon Bus Station similarly relies upon passengers to peer through steamed up windows from outside after 7pm). Facilities at St. Ives are even worse with signage barely indicating whether the small toilets are even available to the public and no heated waiting area adjacent to the stops. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, the Eco Building at Longstanton remains **unstaffed and closed** to the travelling public for long periods. Again I re-iterate that I have raised this matter with Councillor Bates at Council and I checked this situation last week when the building **was closed to the public on a particularly cold day.** Members of the public and bus drivers have complained to me personally about the lack of toilet availability. If Council agrees to charge for the use of these facilities then



they should be open for use and staffed during bus operational hours. Whilst appreciating that the **St. Ives facilities were downgraded** as a means of reducing the construction contract target price, these remain **sub-standard in terms of a modern transport system** and detract from public inclination to use on a regular basis. The argument might also run, that any revenue derived from charging should be used to finance proper improvement at this location and not used to cross subsidise income in other budgets. There is of course a further anomaly that passengers accessing CGB at Trumpington Park and Ride are already using the **much maligned number plate recognition system** as applied to all **Cambridge P&R sites**.

5. **Ticketing Technology.** The proposed technology has already proven to be **very unpopular in Cambridge and has resulted in a decrease in bus use**. The question will undoubtedly be asked as to why officers are proposing such an unnecessarily expensive system in the light of recent experience. Furthermore due to vandalism of the £45,000 ticket machines on the Busway, passengers can no longer purchase tickets in advance using cash. Some machines were out of service for many months and advance ticket purchase is now available only by using a card. Were these machines a good investment? The travelling public distrusts this system and are now mainly purchasing tickets from the driver. This negates the whole concept of off bus ticketing and has operational implications of "bunching services" due to increasing dwell times at stops and the need for bus drivers to carry more change. All of these ticketing problems when added together pose a risk of further decline in the use of public transport. The policy should be carefully reviewed in the light of experience."

**Response from Councillor Ian Bates,**  
**Chairman of Economy and Environment Committee**

These issues were discussed at the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February, and the minutes for that meeting are now available at :  
<http://tinyurl.com/cccl-hci-100215>

Paragraph 2 – The raising of parking revenue is separate to meeting the cost of operation of the Busway. The Economy and Environment Committee report in November 2014, when the decision to introduce the parking charge at St Ives and Longstanton sites was made, clearly stated that the cost of operation of the Busway is covered completely by the access charges paid by the two operators Whippet and Stagecoach. That position has not changed. The report also clearly stated that the parking charges were being introduced to raise revenue. Therefore the TRO decision is not conflicting with established Council policy and does not meet the criteria to be considered as a key decision.

Paragraph 3 – As noted the operation of the Busway is and will remain cost neutral to the County Council. The cost of implementation of the parking charges is being met from the Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) Directorate budget. The operational costs of the Busway will continue to be managed and reported as at present. The income and operating costs of the car park charging scheme will be managed and reported separately and in a transparent manner.

Paragraph 4 – Sickness within the CGB Operating Team in recent months has meant that the building at Longstanton has not been open as much as we would have wished. There is currently only limited capacity within the team to cover if sickness arises as staffing levels are at the minimum necessary. I have asked officers to look at the staffing issue to see if additional staff can be afforded. I agree with Cllr Mason that it is important to have all the available facilities open to the travelling public. The toilet block at St Ives is one of only two

buildings on site and is conveniently located. Real time information is available at the bus stops.

Paragraph 5 – The parking ticketing system allows users to pay for parking online on a weekly, monthly, annual or pay as you go basis, and is convenient for both regular and occasional users. Those wishing to pay on site will pay for parking separately from paying for their bus tickets, as the existing bus ticket machines will be retained. The numbers of passengers using the CGB has grown strongly since its opening in August 2011 and now exceeds the forecast. The acts of vandalism and the continued threat of vandalism meant that the decision had to be taken to limit certain Busway ticket machines to accepting only credit and debit cards. This is regrettable but was done following consultation with the operators who were happy to work with the Council to address the problem of theft of cash from the ticket machines. In addition to the Busway ticket machines the use of smartcards and a wide range of season ticket products from the operators mean that only a small proportion of passengers purchase their tickets with cash on the bus.