

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 18th February 2014

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 4.55 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, D Giles, G Gillick, D Harty, R Henson, R Hickford, J Hipkin, B Hunt, D Jenkins, N Kavanagh, G Kenney, S Kindersley, P Lagoda, A Lay, M Leeke, M Loynes, I Manning, R Manning, M Mason, M McGuire, L Nethsingha, F Onasanya, T Orgee, J Palmer, P Read, P Reeve, J Reynolds, M Rouse, S Rylance, P Sales, J Schumann, J Scutt, M Shellens, M Shuter, M Smith, A Taylor, M Tew, S van de Kerkhove, S van de Ven, A Walsh, J Whitehead, J Williams, G Wilson, J Wisson and F Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors A Dent and P Topping

47. MINUTES – 11TH DECEMBER 2013

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 11th December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

49. 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 no-statutory interests. The following Members declared non-statutory disclosable interests under the Code of Conduct:

Councillor	Minute	Details
Brown P	51	Member of Cromwell Museum Management Committee
Downes	51	Member of Cromwell Museum Management Committee Friend of Cromwell Museum Former Headteacher of school, which housed the Museum

50. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Council noted one question from a member of the public as set out in **Appendix B**.

51. PETITIONS

Two petitions were presented by members of the public, as set out in **Appendix C**.

The Chairman thanked the first petitioner and advised that the Leader of the Council would respond in writing.

The second petition was presented by a member of the public, as set out in Appendix C. As the petition contained over 3,000 signatures, the organiser had asked, as set out in the County Council's Petitions Scheme, for the petition to be debated at the meeting.

Following discussion, the Council agreed to consider any proposals on Cromwell Museum as part of the Business Plan debate.

52. ITEM FOR DETERMINATION FROM CABINET

Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals 2014/15

It was moved by the Chairman of the 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 Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor McGuire, that the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting of 14th January 2014 on the Business Plan, as set out in Section 3.1 of Agenda Item 6 including amendments detailed in the report be adopted.

Members then debated the Council's Business Plan and the Budget Proposals 2014/15. Several members, including Cabinet members, paid tribute to the hard work undertaken by officers during the Business Plan process, and thanked them for their efforts.

The Liberal Democrat amendment, attached as **Appendix D**, was proposed by Councillor Leeke and seconded by Councillor Nethsingha.

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

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats in favour; Conservatives, most UKIP and Labour against; Independent Members and 1 UKIP Member abstained].

The UKIP amendment, attached as **Appendix E**, was proposed by Councillor Bullen and seconded by Councillor Bywater.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bates and seconded by Councillor Sales that the amendment be put to the vote with no further debate. It

was resolved by a majority that the amendment be put to the vote.

[Voting pattern: Conservatives, some Liberal Democrats, Labour and some Independents in favour; some Liberal Democrats, UKIP and some Independents against]

The UKIP amendment, on being put to the vote, was lost.

[Voting pattern: most UKIP in favour; Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Labour against; Independent Members and 1 UKIP Member abstained]

The Labour amendment, attached as **Appendix F**, was proposed by Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Scutt.

Following discussion, the Labour amendment, on being put to the vote, was lost.
[Voting pattern: Labour in favour; Conservatives and most UKIP against; Liberal Democrats, Independent Members and 1 UKIP Member abstained]

A Conservative amendment detailed, attached as **Appendix G**, was proposed by Councillor Curtis and seconded by Councillor Count.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, Independent and some UKIP Members in favour; some UKIP Members against; 1 UKIP Member abstained]

The following amendment, as detailed below, was proposed by Councillor Downes and seconded by Councillor P Brown who in doing so, paid tribute to John Goldsmith, the curator of the museum:

Amendment to line B/R.6.150

That the proposed cut in 2015/16 of £30,000 to Cromwell Museum be deferred for 12 months to the financial year 2016/17.

This is to allow the Cromwell Museum Management Committee to work with consultants, officers, other public bodies, grant-making bodies and the local community to set up a structure which will guarantee the continuing existence and development of the Museum.

This saving removal will be matched by an additional transfer from the General Reserve in the sum of £30,000 in that financial year.

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

[Voting pattern: most Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, some UKIP, Labour and Independents in favour; some Conservatives, 1 UKIP against.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives and Independents in favour; most Liberal Democrats and most UKIP members against; Labour Members, 1 Liberal

Democrat and 1 UKIP abstained]

That approval be given to:

- a. The Service/ Directorate cash limits as set out in Section 4 of the Business Plan.
- b. a total County Budget Requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £752,673,000 as set out in Section 3, Table 4.1 of the Business Plan.
- c. a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £234,668,336 (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 4.1 of the Business Plan.
- d. 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 (209,163), as set out in Section 3, Table 4.2 of the Business Plan reflecting a 1.99% increase:

Band	Ratio	Amount (£)
A	6/9	747.96
B	7/9	872.62
C	8/9	997.28
D	9/9	1,121.94
E	11/9	1,371.26
F	13/9	1,620.58
G	15/9	1,869.90
H	18/9	2,243.88

- e. the Prudential Borrowing, Prudential Indicators as set out in Section 3, Table 6.3 of the Business Plan.
- f. the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in brief in Section 3 and comprehensively in Section 8 of the Business Plan.
- g. 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.
- h. Capital Payments in 2014-15 up to £179.6m arising from:
 - i. Commitments from schemes already approved; and
 - ii. The consequences of new starts (for the five years 2014-15 to 2018-19) shown in summary in Section 3, Table 5.3 of the Business Plan.
- i. That the proposed cut in 2015/16 of £30,000 to Cromwell Museum be deferred for 12 months to the financial year 2016/17.
- j. The Conservative amendment detailed in Appendix G.

53. CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL - CHANGE OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS TO A COMMITTEE SYSTEM (RESIDUAL AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS)

It was moved by the Chairman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Kindersley, and seconded by the Chairman of the Council, Councillor K Reynolds, that the recommendations as set out in the report be approved.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Downes and seconded by Councillor Nethsingha:

Article 7, The Leader

Add a new paragraph 7.06 to the end of this section:

A Committee Chairman/woman will not simultaneously be a Group's Lead member for the services managed by that Committee.

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

[Voting pattern: 1 Conservative, Liberal Democrats, some Labour, and 1 UKIP in favour; most Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat, most UKIP, some Labour and all Independents against; 1 Liberal Democrat and 2 UKIP and 2 Labour Members abstained]

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

[Voting pattern: most Conservatives, most Liberal Democrats, most UKIP, most Labour and Independents in favour; 1 Conservative and 1 Labour against; 1 Conservative, some Liberal Democrats and 2 UKIP Members abstained]

It was resolved to approve:

- i) a number of residual amendments to the new Constitution recommended by the Constitution and Ethics Committee (detailed in bold throughout the report) at its meeting on 23rd January 2014; and
- ii) Authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, to make any other minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.

54. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10 for consideration at the current meeting. The Chairman placed on record his thanks to the two Members who had had agreed to defer their motions to the meeting in March.

55. QUESTIONS

a) Oral Questions

Eight questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9.1, as set out in

Appendix H. In response to these questions, the following items were agreed for further action:

- In response to a question from Councillor Jenkins, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning agreed to support the local MP Jim Paice who would be writing to the Minister requesting the erection of noise barriers along the A14.
- In response to a question from Councillor Downes, the Leader of the Council agreed to follow up on the request to ensure an improvement in the service provided to Members by LGSS IT.
- In response to a question from Councillor Ian Manning, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed to write to Councillor Manning detailing what the Council was doing to support schools, especially primary schools, in the Government's 'Year of Code' initiative. He also agreed to work with Councillor Manning to get some support for these schools.
- In response to a question from Councillor Taylor, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure offered to help in arranging a meeting with relevant officers to assist with the issues she had raised in relation to the Queen Edith's area.
- In response to questions from Councillor John Reynolds, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor Bates, undertook to write to the Environment Agency to seek a speedy resolution to issues relating to the bridge over the Oakington Road and dredging.
- In response to a question raised by Councillor Cearn, the Leader of the Council undertook to raise with Group Leaders the issue of flags flying at Shire Hall.

b) Written Questions

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

56. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

No appointments were made.

Chairman

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 18TH FEBRUARY 2014
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed the following distinguished guests to the meeting:

James Buxton DL, High Sheriff
Hugh Duberly, Lord Lieutenant
Mr and Mrs Counsell
Cllr Jason Ablewhite Leader of Huntingdon District Council
Cllr Hilary Cox, Chairman of Norfolk County Council

AWARDS

Society of IT Managers – ICT Service Award

LGSS IT Services has won the prestigious ICT service award for outstanding achievement in customer satisfaction from SOCITM (Society of IT Managers). Customer satisfaction is benchmarked nationally and the team improved on a previously excellent score (in the top three all-time scores in the data set) at a time when most other organisations' scores declined due to budget cuts.

The vInspired National Awards

The vInspired National Awards recognise and celebrate young people (under 25) and youth workers who have made an extraordinary contribution to their communities through volunteering. VInspired believes in giving young people the recognition they deserve and wants everyone to know about the great things young people are doing.

The Voice Matters Group has been named regional winner for the East in the 'Team Activity' category. The Voice Matters Group represents young people in care, living in Cambridgeshire. It is made up of young people who are or who have been in care. The group meets to discuss issues and policies affecting young people in care in their area. In the past year they have also visited the Houses of Parliament to represent the views of children in care and have created two animations that are now used to train new foster carers. The regional winners will be shortlisted to national finalists in February 2014 with the national award winners revealed at an awards ceremony at the Indig02 in London on 27th March 2014.

Terry Ryall, vInspired CEO says: "The Voice Matters Group are a complete inspiration. As a regional winner in the Team Activity category you need to demonstrate a complete dedication to volunteering and show how you have built positive relationships, brought people from diverse backgrounds together and strengthened communities. The Voice Matters Group have done all this and more and should be immensely proud of their achievements."

'Finding My Way' animation project

The 'Finding My Way' animation project created by young people last summer has been selected to be shown at the British Film Industry (BFI) Festival at the Southbank in London in February.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

Local Enterprise Partnership Prize Challenge funding awarded for multi-agency project inspired by Timebanking in Cambridgeshire

The 'Enterprising Communities' project partnership, led by the Cambridge Housing Society group, has been successful in receiving funding from the first ever Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Prize Challenge Fund. The project has been awarded £30,000 for a 12 month scheme starting in January 2014 to achieve goals around skills and employment.

'Enterprising Communities' builds on the existing Timebanking model in Cambridgeshire to focus on achieving life skills and employment outcomes for individuals. The project will provide a personalised approach to enable people to improve their skills and gain work and will also provide ongoing support to people (either because they 'leave' the project or gain employment or start a business) by strengthening and widening people's networks.

The 'Enterprising Communities' project brings together a wide range of community organisations including CHS Group, the Cambridgeshire Timebanking network, Illuminate, the Fredericks Foundation, Outset Huntingdonshire, Business in the Community and Cambridgeshire County Council (Community Engagement and Adult Social Care) in this new and innovative approach to creating sustainable employment.

MESSAGES

USAF Lakenheath

The Chairman has, on behalf of the people of Cambridgeshire, written to USAF Lakenheath to express deepest sympathy and sincere condolences for the families and colleagues of the four service personnel who died in the tragic helicopter crash on 7 January.

COUNTY COUNCIL 18TH FEBRUARY 2014

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question to Councillor McGuire, Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure from Mr Alan Edwards, Chairman of Trustees of Cambridge Dial-a-Ride

Thank you very much for the opportunity to come along to ask this question this morning. As already said, my name is Alan Edwards. I am the Chairman of Cambridge Dial-a-Ride. For those of you who do not know what Cambridge Dial-a-Ride do, we are a charity, a community bus organisation that transports those people who are either disabled or aged from their home into the city, from the villages and as I say, within the city. We support that particular local community by ensuring that they are able to use our transport as they are unable to use the transport available to them in the commercial manner. We give them the opportunity to live at home by providing that service and so that they can enjoy activities that otherwise would be outside of their reach. We take them shopping, we take them to the dentist, we take them to the hospital. This is the only way some of them are able to get out and about to those areas. A recent survey we undertook highlighted the benefit that many members of Cambridge Dial-a-Ride enjoyed, by us being the only means by which they could get out from their homes. With the cutbacks to funding that we understand are being put to you today within the Budget meeting, resulting in the reduction in our activity, the actual cost of the losses we are going to have is somewhere in the order of about £50,000. What I would like to ask is: how is the Council going to reconcile the cost reduction that you are going to be voting on today to reduce the grants and the increase in the cost of caring for those people who are unable to leave their homes in the future?

Reply by Councillor McGuire

Chairman, as I'm sure Mr Edwards appreciates, the Council has had to take some hard decisions in order to manage the very difficult budget position that it finds itself in. We have had to look at all discretionary spending such as support for Dial-a-Ride very carefully in order to protect core statutory services. Proposals in the draft Business Plan offset the changes to community transport funding in 2014/15 and the year 2015/16 by funding from the Community Transport Fund. This means that for the next two years, there would be no change in service. This approach reduces the pressures to find increased savings from other service areas and would allow us two years to consider the longer term future of grant funding to community transport operations. We have carried out a Community Impact Assessment for the proposed reductions in funding and this does show some potential impact on sections of the community. However, I am pleased to say that in our final review of the Budget, we have been able to identify an additional £500,000 that we propose to earmark for community transport. This will become more apparent as today's Business Plan debate takes place. Our proposals include forming a cross-party group to consider how we can best use these funds to deliver transport services for our more isolated communities. At this stage, I do not want to prejudge the work of this Group, but the objective would be to make sure we make the best use of funds available to deliver transport to those most in need. I would like to thank Mr Edwards for his question and would ask him to accept that I share his concerns for the future of community transport, as I am sure all my colleagues here today do. I value the work you all do, but I would urge you to work with the Council to ensure that future funding from local councils is both equitable and affordable.

Supplementary question to Councillor McGuire from Mr Alan Edwards

Thank you Councillor McGuire, for that additional information. That certainly sounds maybe a little bit more positive than we had heard in the past, bearing in mind that all we have ever really been given is rumours of what is likely to be put to you today. The point that I would like to just put as a supplementary question, if I may this morning, is that in order to help you maybe in making that decision when that opportunity comes for the future funding. In the past we have been asked to assist the Council when you have been taking out commercial bus routes and we have been asked in the past whether or not we can offer a demand-responsive service to supplement those areas that are not going to have a commercial bus route. There is no way that Cambridge Dial-a-Ride can continue in the size it is, if the cuts that are envisaged are going to take place. To be asked to do a demand-responsive service and to help supplement those commercial bus routes would be totally out of the question should those cuts come about. I just wonder and maybe you have already answered the question, but how that can be reconciled with the cuts that you are putting forward to the Council today. Thank you very much indeed.

Reply by Councillor McGuire

Chairman, as I said when I spoke previously, I do not want to prejudge the work of the group, but we will certainly be looking to see some innovative approaches to community transport so that it does become sustainable in terms of funding in the future. Whether that be demand-responsive transport or other solutions. I suspect that the demand-responsive transport and how it might work might vary across the County but there are a number of community transport operators who we will want to work with. So as I say, I do not want to prejudge the work, but I am sure that considerable thought will be given and any innovative ideas are clearly welcome and we will obviously want to consider those.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 18TH FEBRUARY 2014

ITEM 5 – PETITIONS

A) Text of a petition containing 97 signatures presented by Mrs Debbie Townsend

“Petition Summary and Background:

Current lollipop person is retiring and is not being replaced by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Action petitioned for:

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to replace the retiring lollipop person on the Hill Rise zebra crossing directly opposite Thorndown School, St Ives, Cambridgeshire. We are all very concerned about children’s safety and feel the road warrants a lollipop person.”

B) Text of a petition containing 3,951 signatures presented by Mr Bob Pugh

“We request that Cambridgeshire County Council withdraws the proposal (B/R.6.150) in the proposed Business Plan for 2015-16 for the planned closure of the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, and that funding be guaranteed, at no less than the current level, for the next five years, until and unless another viable operator takes responsibility.

The Museum provides a focus on the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) by the collection, conservation, exhibition and interpretation of relevant material.

It does so for the enjoyment and benefit, educational and economic of the local community and for all visitors as a well informed and unique source of Cromwell’s significance both within the county and nationally. This request is made in the knowledge that the Museum contributes to the overall objectives of the authority and adds greatly to the quality of life for the people of Cambridgeshire and beyond.”

Cambridgeshire County Council Liberal Democrats
Budget Proposals 2014

Despite the very tight financial situation faced by Cambridgeshire County Council, Liberal Democrats wish to see the council become more effective in maintaining basic services, more prudent in its spending, and more proactive in the face of climate change.

This budget shows how that can be achieved by taking a longer-term approach, and providing savings on into the future.

Our key themes in this budget are:

- Protecting vulnerable people and the services they rely on, particularly through preventative services which improve lives and save money in the long run;
- Enabling people to get around by improving the standard of road and pavement repairs; maintaining the gritting of roads, pavements and cycleways; and maintaining rural bus and community transport services;
- Combating congestion and poor air quality by enabling and encouraging travel other than by private car for people for whom this is an option. We would achieve this by preserving concessions on Park and Ride buses; supporting new rail infrastructure including Science Park and Soham Stations, and March to Wisbech and Cambridge to Bedford rail links; completing the Chisholm Trail and rolling out safe cycle routes in the city, market towns, between villages and along rural transport corridors, greatly facilitated through the Greater Cambridge City Deal;
- Looking beyond front-line services for economies.

We would seek to achieve savings by:

- Initiating a discussion with other councils in Cambridgeshire about forming unitary authorities to save money and improve accountability for local residents;
- Forming a company to own and manage most of the County Farms estate;
- Selling Shire Hall. Is it really more important to have a prestigious, expensive and energy-inefficient headquarters building than to maintain adequate public services?

Vulnerable People

Children's Centres

The Liberal Democrats believe that proper investment in a child's early years is critical to their long-term happiness and success. That is why we view the current Conservative proposals to reduce the services offered by Children's Centres with great concern.

We accept that there may need to be some restructuring and our alternative proposal does not restore all of the funding being removed. The money we propose to put back in could be used:

- a) to invest in volunteering, i.e. funding volunteer groups to provide some of the less specialised provision such as the very popular 'stay and play' clubs;
- b) to counter-balance what we see is an over-emphasis on vulnerable groups in dense conurbations, leaving the isolated rural deprived at greater risk;
- c) to invest in marketing the valuable resources and buildings of the Children's Centres and in particular working with parish councils;
- d) to mitigate the risk of taking out so many management posts in one year.

Service reductions of the severity proposed by the Conservatives risk increasing costs down the line in schools and social services if potential problems are not detected early and appropriate provision made.

Early Help and Preventative Services

The saving in the Conservatives' proposed Business Plan is coming from substantial reductions in the services available to children and families who are in need but below the threshold for social care. Work with this group is critically important to preventing families from coming into the social care system. The saving will mean reductions across Enhanced and Preventative Services, and as a result is likely to have an impact on the work of locality teams with young people and families. The work of these teams in supporting families in staying together, and helping parents to provide the best support they can for their children, is a core part of the preventive work done by the council's Children, Families and Adults department. We believe that reducing this service will not only lead to worse outcomes for Cambridgeshire children, but will also lead to higher costs in the longer term, as families do not receive the support they need when they start to struggle, and then intervention becomes necessary at a later stage and at greater cost.

Learning Disabilities Partnership

We are halving the savings target for reductions in personal budgets. These budgets provide activities for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The savings will need to come from the "activities" part of the personal budget. The activities which are available to people with Learning Disabilities not only provide important occupation and social contact for the individuals concerned, but it also give their carers a crucial break. While we support the idea of reviewing these packages, as there may be some savings which can be made without reducing the quality of life for Learning Disabled individuals and their carers, we do not wish to force reductions in activity on some of the most vulnerable in society. There is a corresponding re-instatement of half of the transport budget to enable these clients to get to their activities.

Mental Health Adult Counselling

This is a new initiative, focussed on providing additional support for the parents of children with Special Educational Needs. Anecdotal and academic evidence suggests that this group are particularly vulnerable to stress, depression and other mental health problems. The £20k for the first year is for a study investigating whether this is an unusually vulnerable group, and what could be done to provide additional counselling and support at an early stage. The rationale is again that by providing support for parents early, we can keep more families together, and achieve better outcomes for children.

Community, Arts & Sports Grants

The grants and the officers who manage them are critical to building community capacity and

resilience. Whilst this is a very small amount of funding, it levers vastly disproportionate amounts of funding from other agencies for community projects. As such it would be a complete false economy to reduce this grant. Through recent restructuring a number of community services have been brought together, this has brought about additional flexibility of resource.

Enabling People to Get Around

Highways and Pavement Maintenance

It is estimated that £300million is needed to address the backlog of outstanding repairs to the county's highways network. This additional funding would reinstate funds for road and pavement repairs. We are keen to ensure momentum is not lost on current work arising from the Liberal Democrat motion of July 2013, to tackle highways maintenance in a more strategic and effective manner, and also to ensure that the remaining £60million of the council's prudential borrowing for Highways Maintenance, arising from a Liberal Democrat chaired Member Led Review, is spent effectively. A key area requiring close attention is pavements, particularly in Cambridge but also in market towns and village centres.

Winter Maintenance

We support the initiative to save money by being more efficient in the use of gritting material and planning gritting routes, but we do not agree with a 35% cut in the road-length to be gritted in icy conditions. We would retain the finance to continue with the current level of service.

Bus Subsidies

A decent public transport system is one that allows all residents to access public services and employment, education and training opportunities, so that they can lead independent and productive lives. In a largely rural county this system must assume a level of subsidy to run transport services in more isolated areas, where commercial services are not viable. Some new schemes under the Cambridgeshire Future Transport banner could add to the rural public transport network, however this should supplement rather than wholly replace subsidised buses, many of which provide good value for money. The deployment of bus subsidies should be done, not on the basis of historic leftovers, but rather on a strategic and evidence-based assessment of the county's transport needs, using the mapping tools that are readily available.

Community Transport

Community transport is indispensable to the wellbeing of thousands of Cambridgeshire's more isolated and less mobile residents, for whom it provides lifeline access to public services and social contact. The impact of isolation on mortality is now commonly accepted, as is the fact that Community Transport is not viable without grant funding. Since the tightening of NHS patient transport criteria, Community Transport providers are providing more frequent and longer journeys to health services. Against an aging population, Community Transport services must expand rather than contract; survival is not enough. Failure to nurture and develop Community Transport will bring new burdens to the public purse.

Concessionary Fares on Park-and-Ride Buses

Concessionary fare pass-holders using Park-and-Ride buses will already need to absorb

new parking charges. Withdrawing concessions on Park-and-Ride buses would compound any disincentive to using Park and Ride and create new problems, including displaced parking and congestion, that Cambridge can ill-afford.

Railways and other High Quality Passenger Transport

Liberal Democrats have consistently campaigned for new railway stations at Chesterton (Cambridge Science Park) and Soham and for the reopening of the March to Wisbech railway line. We support their inclusion in the Council's plans. We furthermore look forward to the opportunities afforded by the City Deal and the involvement of the Local Enterprise Partnership to introduce more routes. We support a west-bound rail link to Bedford because this will not just connect Cambridge to Oxford but also provide a rail connection between Cambourne and Cambridge. We support other high quality passenger transport proposals both south-bound from Cambridge and along the A10 corridor. However we caution against the presumption in favour of more guided bus routes. Finally we would argue the case for a national realignment of regulations which would enable better bus/rail integration.

Cycling Infrastructure

The completion of the Chisholm Trail as a key link for Cambridge, the expansion of cycling schemes in market towns, and the expanded roll-out and joining up of dedicated cycle routes linking villages and key employment destinations along rural corridors are all necessary in order to realise the potential for modal shift in a county that is ideally suited to cycling as a regular mode of transport. Potential health, economic and environmental benefits are overwhelmingly documented and evidence of suppressed demand is abundantly clear. The expansion of Greater Cambridge requires modal shift to avoid gridlock congestion in the City and South Cambridgeshire, and we welcome the unlocking of necessary funding that the City Deal would facilitate.

Finance and Administration

Renewable Energy and Actions to Reduce the County's Carbon Footprint

The Liberal Democrats have urged the Council to invest in renewable energy. This is good because it furthers the Council's climate change agenda and because it is simply a good investment. It will further promote the Cambridgeshire Energy Switch and similar schemes as they provide immediate advantages for residents. Our proposal to sell off Shire Hall is another policy consistent with furthering this Council's climate change agenda.

Unitary Councils

There are seven principal local authorities in Cambridgeshire, each with its own set of councillors and chief officers; its own headquarters, council chamber and bureaucracy. There are joint meetings, liaison meetings, discussions and negotiations. Outside Peterborough there is confusion about which council does what, who serves on which council, and whom to contact with a query. Within local government the arrangements for joint services and shared services are becoming ever more complicated. Quite simply there is scope for saving money, reducing complexity and improving accountability by amalgamating councils. With the current financial pressures on local government, which show no signs of reducing in the foreseeable future, we cannot ignore the potential for improvements, efficiency and economies that unitary councils for Cambridgeshire could bring.

Cambridgeshire County Council is uniquely placed to open up the debate. We can say from the beginning that this is not an attempt to take over the districts, but to explore whether there can be a shared vision of the way forward. Whilst admitting that we do not have a fixed view of the result in terms of geography or number, we can say that the answer is likely to be greater than one and less than seven.

At this stage the timing and extent of the savings is impossible to quantify, but the more the issue is delayed the longer we will have to wait to see those savings.

County Farms

County Farms were established after the First World War to provide job opportunities and housing for “heroes”. There have been many changes since then.

Cambridgeshire’s County Farms estate currently provides a business opportunity for over 200 tenants and the net income from the estate is budgeted at about £2.8million. There is also a fairly steady stream of capital receipts from the sale of buildings and land from the estate.

The estate does however tie up a lot of capital which could be used to pay off some of the council’s debt, producing a much larger saving than the income from the rents.

The proposal is that a company should be set up to take over the ownership of most of the estate. The land excluded from the transfer would be where there was a real prospect of it being sold at significantly above the agricultural value, or where it is being used, or there are plans for it to be used, by the county council for other purposes. The existing tenants on the land transferred to the farms company would have protected agricultural tenancies so that they could continue farming as at present.

The farms company would be an attractive investment having a proven long-term income stream, backed by a very tangible asset – the land itself. The farms company could be sold by the council as a whole, or in part. A potential buyer could be the council’s pension fund. It is difficult to be sure of a price for the farms company but it is estimated at about £100million.

To allow for the time to set up the company and arrange the flotation of the company a sale date of 31 December 2014 has been assumed. The revenue effects would be as follows:

County Farms		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Flotation of Estate at £100m	Interest (4.3%)	1075	4128	3956	3784
	MRP (4%)		4000	4000	4000
Remove Investment Scheme	Interest (4.3%)	43	77	112	146
	MRP (4%)		200	200	200
Revenue Impact of Reduced Borrowing		1118	8405	8268	8130
Less Farms Revenue Surplus		-711	-2920	-2995	-3070
Net Revenue Saving		407	5485	5273	5060

Sale of Shire Hall

Shire Hall is an elegant 1930s building. It is showing its age. Its poor energy rating is well

known and the building is expensive to heat and maintain. Access for disabled people is inadequate to say the least.

The reduction in the number of staff employed by the Council means that fewer offices are needed. We propose that the Council should sell Shire Hall, and the Octagon building attached to it, to someone who can afford to do the work necessary to bring it up to standard.

Work is already in hand to identify where the staff and meeting space in the building could be accommodated. The loss of the council chamber is an opportunity for the six meetings a year of the full council to be held in different parts of Cambridgeshire – helping all councillors and senior officers to get around and relate to more of the county. A lease-back agreement for the bottom of the Octagon where the computer mainframe is housed would mean that it could remain there until it is replaced.

We are aware that other proposals for the Shire Hall campus are being considered. Those should be considered alongside this proposal to compare the relative financial benefits, taking into account the cost of necessary improvements to the old building if the intention is to retain it.

The figures below assume a sale date of 30/9/15 with a net sale value of £7.5million.

Sale of Shire Hall at £7.5m	2014/15 £000s	2015/16 £000s	2016/17 £000s	2017/18 £000s
Interest (4.3%)		162	323	310
MRP (4%)			300	300
Running Costs		400	800	800
Removal Costs		-50		
Net Revenue Saving	0	512	1423	1410

Open Source Software

Open Source software is what the internet runs on, what the most successful IT businesses are running on, and Liberal Democrats understand that and believe in its key principles. We will install an open source by default culture across the Council, and aim to bring all IT expenditure into the IT department, where it can be most efficiently allocated. This will save the Council about £80k per year.

Communications

We propose a further reduction in staff in the Communications Team.

Slippage on Capital Schemes

Cambridgeshire has a very large capital programme including many new schools and school extensions as well as other buildings, roads and rail-related projects. Inevitably there are delays in constructing these schemes caused by a variety of factors from the planning process to the weather. The current forecast for this year is that over £40million of work will slip into next financial year. This is contributing to a saving of £2million in interest rates. It is not the intention to deliberately delay any schemes, but, in line with experience over many years, we are estimating that the interest saving as a result of slippage will continue to be at least £1million per year.

General Reserve

The overall effect of these changes will be to add just over £1million less to the General Reserve in 2014/15, but to replace that amount, with interest, in 2015/16.

Liberal Democrat Budget Proposals

		2014/15	2015/16
Revenue Changes		000s	000s
LDP Calculator	A/R.6.107	650	650
LDP Transport	A/R.6.108	140	140
Children's Centres	A/R.6.504	625	755
Early Help	A/R.6.508		1,500
Highways Maintenance	B/R.6.107	196	196
Winter Maintenance	B/R.6.132		600
Arts and Sports Grants	B/R.6.141		20
Community Grants	B/R.6.143		40
Bus Subsidies	B/R.6.204	873	873
Community Transport	B/R.6.207	150	263
P&R Concessionary Fares	B/R.7.024		300
Mental Health Adult Counselling		20	100
Communications	C/R.6.301	-100	-100
Open Source Software		-80	-80
Revenue Changes Sub Total		2474	5257
Capital Changes			
County Farms		-407	-5485
Shire Hall			-512
Slippage on Capital Schemes		-1000	-1000
Capital Changes Sub Total		-1407	-6997
Changes Sub Total		1067	-1740
Interest @ 4.3%		46	
General Reserve		-1113	1113
Overall Saving		0	-627

UKIP STATEMENT ON THE 5 YEAR BUDGET PLAN

UKIP has identified 5 core goals

1. To not increase council tax
2. To identify new revenue streams for CCC
3. To identify savings with minimum impact on service delivery
4. To integrate the council with partner organisations
5. To move to a unitary authority.

This report identifies the UKIP group's proposal for new savings, new revenue streams and new ways of working not currently in the proposed CCC budget proposal adopted by cabinet. The UKIP proposal identifies what we will do differently in order to achieve a council tax freeze whilst providing a balanced budget and no extra cuts to key front line services.

Background and national scene

The UKIP statement on the CCC 5 year budget plan proposal is aimed at achieving the five core goals above. We aim to make the organisation as efficient as possible while also addressing the critical need for new revenue streams.

Above all UKIP aims to initiate a cultural change in CCC to develop into an organisation willing to blur the organisational boundaries with partners and to start the transformational process into an organisation willing and capable of making the move to become a Unitary Authority.

We aim to illustrate how we will fund a tax freeze for Cambridgeshire tax payers without direct cuts to front line services beyond the current plan proposed by CCC.

The UKIP group recognises that these are difficult economic times for the people of Cambridgeshire. Residents and communities are suffering from the results of poor government decisions and difficult economic conditions.

At a time when residents are finding it difficult to pay their mortgage, heat their homes, put fuel in their cars to get to work and put food on their table, we believe that it is wrong for CCC to compound this problem further by taking more money from household budgets by increasing council tax.

Government is making clear noises that it does not want councils to put up taxes and is incentivising those who do not.

UKIP is the party of small government and low tax, passionate about keeping money where it belongs, the householders purse, paying for essential and escalating household bills, rather than in the County Council's coffers.

UKIP is the party of efficiency, believing that councils should be as lean as possible in good economic times as well as bad.

UKIP is the party of transformation, seeking a radical agenda of change management to break down the barriers in the way of the council so that its partners are fit and willing to move to unitary status.

UKIP recognises that the changes that we seek to make would have been less challenging to implement in previous better economic times and regrets that the previous administrations did not tackle waste, efficiencies and new revenue streams that financial pressures are now forced upon them. We are now suffering from the impact of poor past decisions.

UKIP believes that the move to the committee system of governance will allow a more collegiate approach to decision making that will achieve greater consensus, better scrutiny and better and wider debate, more input from members and communities and better decisions.

UKIP regrets that previous administrations had not grasped the nettle of introducing new revenue streams and efficiencies over the last two decades that could have created a situation where the current financial pressures would be much less challenging.

The impact on Cambridgeshire households of the planned year on year tax rises is cumulative not just over time but also across other tax raising authorities in Cambridgeshire including district councils, Police and Crime Commissioner, Fire Authority and many town and parish councils planning to increase their tax take from limited household budgets.

We recognise the urgent need for UKIP to enter the decision making institutions of national government that can positively impact local government budgets.

Currently £55 Million is being given to the European Union every day by the UK, money which UKIP would use to provide services and infrastructure in Britain.

Some EU legislation directly impacts CCC. Landfill tax alone costs CCC nearly £8million per year.

Reducing immigration to a fairer system where EU immigrants enter the UK based on their economic use to the economy rather than the open policy of previous and current governments will have positive impacts on local economies and council budgets including Cambridgeshire's. The huge increase in EU mass immigration over the last 20 years has put extreme pressure on council services and the demand for houses across the country.

UKIP's national policies on health, education, defence, procurement, transport and Whitehall departmental structures will also have a positive impact on local government finance and service provision.

We acknowledge, however, that UKIP is not yet in government and Cambridgeshire County Council has to work within the constraints of the poor government decisions currently being made. We therefore have not used any of these figures in our plan.

Unitary Council

UKIP believes, that longer term, in order to achieve real significant savings for the people of Cambridgeshire, without impacting core services it is essential that we become a Unitary Authority. We note that if this decision had been taken in previous years, we and our partners would be reaping the rewards of these efficiencies now which would have had a huge positive impact on the current budgets.

UKIP believes that collaborative political leadership, which has been lacking over the past decade is now essential so that efficiencies associated with the transition to, and eventual

implementation of a unitary authority can be achieved as soon as possible which will create significant positive impacts on not just the County Council but also for our potential and current partner organisations.

We believe that the Cabinet and strong leader model of governance has been part of the problem holding decision makers back from this positive move forward to achieving a Unitary Authority.

It is estimated that moving to a Unitary Authority would produce a saving of at least £35 Million.

We have, however, not included this in our five year plan as there are a number of uncertainties as to the timing of when this can be delivered. This includes the boundary commission needing to sign off the decision and the time needed to reach agreement with other authorities.

Tax Freeze

UKIP is a low tax and small government party. We believe that it is wrong for CCC to have year on year tax rises, each with a cumulative impact of taking more and more money out of household budgets.

The impact of our proposal not to implement an annual 1.99% tax rise will require additional savings each year of:

2014/15 : £4.58M

2015/16 : £4.78M

2016/17 : £5.01M

2017/18 : £5.26M

2018/19 : £5.47M

Though challenging, this can be achieved through identifying opportunities for increased revenue income, further savings not currently identified in the proposed CCC budget and a reduction in reserves.

Government grant for tax freeze

The government is urging councils to not increase council tax.

Local government tax rises in tier 2 (district councils) and tier 3 (county councils) have been capped so that any authority implementing a tax rise of 2% or more must hold a referenda.

Local Authorities that implement 1.99% tax rises, as is being proposed by CCC, just below the trigger that the government has set for a referenda have been described by government ministers as “democracy dodgers”.

The government has been offering a ‘Tax Freeze Grant’ set at 1% of the councils budget. The current CCC budget refuses to take the grant for the tax freeze, choosing instead to take this money from Cambridgeshire tax payers and turning away central government money that could come to Cambridgeshire.

Government has also announced that those councils that accepted the tax freeze grant in the past will also now be given the cumulative increase in their base rate. The decision of CCC to not accept the tax freeze grant in the past means that this is further money that is lost to

Cambridgeshire. Though we recognise that this can not be regained in the budget retrospectively and so can't be included in our plan, the opportunity cost of these past decisions should be noted.

Accepting future tax freeze grants does generate revenue for the council in our proposal. The government has offered a two year guarantee of the 1% tax freeze grant for those councils that do not increase council tax, which produces an extra income stream to the council of £2.49M each year.

2014/15 : £2.49M

2015/16 : £2.49M

UKIP's proposal of tax freezes over the 5 year budget period is tied to government continuing to provide a 1% tax freeze grant throughout the period. We are advised that there is a strong expectation that this will be the case.

2016/17 : £2.49M

2017/18 : £2.49M

2018/19 : £2.49M

Reduced General Reserves

Government Ministers have attacked local authorities in the UK for cutting services whilst holding large reserves. We would not claim that CCC reserves are excessive, the current general reserves are held are £12Million having in the past been as low as £5million.

The CCC budget proposes to increase the general reserve to £15million in 2014/15.

UKIP believe that this is a risk adverse approach and will be comfortable with a general reserve of £10M in order to ensure that core services are not cut.

UKIP will remove both the £3million that the CCC plan proposes to put in to reserves in 2014/15 and a further £2million from reserves to use as revenue.

We accept that this creates a potential higher risk for the council, but are advised that this risk is not excessively high. This, along with our other proposals, allows UKIP to achieve tax freezes without further impact to core services.

Removal of all Councillor Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances

UKIP acknowledges that we are living through very difficult economic times for all residents in Cambridgeshire. We recognise that household budgets are under pressure, that is why we are focused on not putting those household budgets under more pressure through tax rises.

UKIP voted against the 25% increase in allowances that councillors awarded themselves in previous years.

UKIP recognises the value of elected councillors and the importance of making the role accessible to all. Given the balance is between cuts to services, increases in tax or reducing costs, in this tough economic position for the council we place services to residents and impact on residents household budgets above remuneration for elected Councillors. As such UKIP proposes to remove all allowances to Councillors, producing a saving to the budget of £780,000 per year.

In order to ensure that councillors from a variety of backgrounds are not economically blocked from being elected councillors, UKIP has not included out of pocket expenses for councillors in our saving. UKIP believes that this provides a balanced and fair approach.

Removal of pay increases

In the difficult economic climate, in order to protect jobs and services UKIP will remove proposed pay increases from the CCC budget.

This will achieve a saving of £960,000 per year.

When further savings can be identified from our proposed member panel reviews, it is a priority to reinstate pay rises for lower paid staff to the budget as soon as possible.

Significant cuts in communications and community engagement budget

UKIP proposes significant spend reductions in the communications and community engagement budget, retaining only those positions that can demonstrate significant added value, essential need or no net cost.

We do acknowledge that any removal of staff will result in lowering standards and increased workload for remaining staff. We also acknowledge that there are redundancy costs associated in removing staff posts, which are covered in the existing CCC budget reserves for redundancies.

- **Removal of communications officer posts**

Whilst UKIP acknowledges the good job done by communications officers in promoting the Council and supporting cabinet members, in order to protect services to residents, we propose the removal of these posts.

We acknowledge that this may increase the risk to the council as it will reduce proactive marketing and increased involvement of council spokesmen / spokeswomen and officers to manager their own communication.

We believe that the current communications strategy is very risk adverse and having dedicated communications officers is a non-essential function that the council can no longer afford.

The removal of all dedicated communications officers will achieve a saving of £210,094 per year.

Where it can be demonstrated that a position can achieve enough revenue to become cost neutral, UKIP will retain that post.

- **Reductions in Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Management activity budget.**

Whilst UKIP believe that community engagement and neighbourhood management and associated budgets have added some value to communities, other organisations and other funding providers are better placed to achieve much of the added value that is generated.

We have identified a saving of £146K from this budget.

- **Discontinue “Cambridgeshire.net” website**

UKIP proposes to discontinue the Cambridgeshire.net website, the format of this site while being appropriate when it was implemented, is now out of date.

This will produce a saving of £92,325 per year

We have not included the unidentified future costs of making the site fit for purpose in our figure as it is not in the current CCC budget.

- **Discontinue “Shape your place” website**

While the Fenland site of shape your place is currently cost neutral, the remainder of the shape your place website has a cost to CCC of £89,470 per year. UKIP believes that if this project has been successful, it should be self funding through the sale of advertising. If it does not provide enough footfall to generate an income to make it cost neutral then its community value is questionable. UKIP’s proposal is to stop funding shape your place with CCC tax payers money.

This will produce a saving of £89,470 per year.

- **Removal of communication and community engagement senior managers posts**

This will achieve a saving of £290,914 per year.

- **Watching brief on other areas of Communications and Community engagement budget**

UKIP proposes keeping a watching brief using a member led panel on the added value v cost of other areas of the communication and community engagement budgets, though we do not to propose to make any changes at present. This includes:

Research, housing and market assessment officers, as this is currently revenue generating and does fulfil statutory functions. At a cost of £471,092 it does generate £161,160 income leaving a net cost of £309,000. UKIP proposes to set up a member panel to look at the work of these posts, to ascertain where the added value is achieved, extra revenue can be generated and if there are posts that are not essential or adding significant value. We however see this as an unidentified cost / revenue area and have not included any extra savings or income in our proposal.

UKIP proposes not to reduce the budget for green spaces support (KH 4000) as it is used to support external organisations and adds value to projects as well as underpinning some statutory obligations. We will however request a member panel to review its work and the value that is added.

UKIP proposes not to reduce the budget for travellers support officer in this proposal as we are advised that it offsets significant extra costs. It currently costs £50,141 per year (KH40003). This is made up of £52,919 gross costs and £2,778 income. We will however request a member panel to review its work and the value that this post adds.

Migration budget and Localism grants are self funding so we propose no change while this is the case but will request a member panel to review the added value achieved.

UKIP has not put any reductions in this proposal regarding grants to voluntary organisations as it has already been reduced in recent years. UKIP will request that a member panel review the work being achieved and outputs to identify how much added value is being generated and to identify if CCC is the most appropriate body to be providing funding. We have not included a reduction in the £102K spend in this proposal.

- **Decision not to fill the proposed new post of corporate business manager**

This will achieve a saving of £43,825 per year

Develop and rent out property at Fitzwilliam Street

UKIP proposes to develop the property now vacant at Fitzwilliam street. Its resale value is estimated at £1.25M. UKIP propose to develop and rent out this property as six flats rather than sell.

This will produce a revenue income of £65K per year.

'Cambridgeshire Homes project'

A significant new venture that UKIP will undertake is to set up a property portfolio. Using loans from the public works loan board we will make a significant investment in purchasing existing housing stock.

By investing £14M of capital per year in purchasing housing over the next 5 years we can create net additional revenue income of £280,000 each year. Based on a 2% margin over the cost of repaying the loan and interest and operating costs.

Purchasing existing properties has the advantage over new builds in that it can come on stream faster and does not encourage excessive new housing developments, UKIP opposes over development and building in the countryside.

Longer term, beyond the time frame that this proposal covers, once the capital loans have been repaid CCC will have a significant housing asset which will achieve a good revenue return

This project also has the long term ability to allow the council to keep rents affordable for local residents

Shared Chief Executive

As part of our transformational strategy, to blur organisational boundaries with partners, in preparation for our intended move to becoming a Unitary Council UKIP plans to share the chief executive with partner(s).

Our primary goal is organisational change and building up a shared organisational culture with partners. However when achieved we anticipate a revenue saving will also occur. By offsetting 50% of the costs associated with the Chief Executive a revenue saving is achieved.

50% of remuneration costs of chief exec achieves a saving of £110,000 per year

50% of the staffing cost supporting the Chief Exec achieves a saving of £120,000 per year.

Changes in working practices

As part of our goal to become a unitary authority, UKIP intends to radically change the way our staff work and the locations they work from, by making the significant cultural change of blurring the organisational boundaries between CCC and its partners. One key part of this cultural change is moving staff to partner organisations' locations, sharing work loads and making joint savings to offset costs through the removal of duplicated roles.

Changes in use of Shire Hall Campus

By changing the working practices and blurring organisational boundaries with partners, it is our intention to free up space on the expensive and out of date Shire Hall campus for redevelopment.

It is anticipated that some of the Octagon will be retained for CCC use including the IT section that has significant moving overheads.

By entering in to a joint venture(s) to redevelop

- the old police house
- the Shire Hall building and part of the octagon building
- the Castle Court building.
- Once implemented there are also savings on running costs and maintenance that are achieved.

Further reductions in room hire, staff subsistence and travel allowances

UKIP will achieve further reductions in

- Room Hire
- Staff subsistence
- Travel allowance

UKIP will request a member led panel looks in detail at room hire, subsistence and travel allowance to support managers in achieving our target figures.

Encouraging the use of video conferencing, home working, car pooling and identifying heavy users of own vehicle mileage to evaluate if providing a CCC van would reduce costs. We will operate an 'essential journey / booking' only policy.

Staffing Review

UKIP will set up a member led panel to review every staffing post that CCC employs / hires in. The panel will be asked to review for every post :

1. is the post essential
2. is the post adding value for CCC
3. is there a more efficient way of achieving the outcome of the post
4. is the post duplicated by CCC or a partner organisation

By working through every post in detail, we believe significant further savings can be made. We have not however included these in our proposal as they are as yet unknown and unidentified. We would urge the panel to initially look at all clerical, administrative and personal assistant posts.

"Love Cambridgeshire Lottery"

UKIP proposes a member led panel looks in to the potential for CCC to set up a 'love Cambridgeshire' lottery. This could be an interesting new revenue stream. No revenue has been put in our plan as the potential of the project is currently unknown.

Overdevelopment

UKIP is opposed to over development and will set up a member led panel to look at the negative impacts on excessive over development / growth in Cambridgeshire to inform our strategic policy on the impact of growth.

Revenue from advertising

UKIP proposes the implementation of a member led panel to look in to potential advertising revenues from selling advertising space on the CCC website, advertising space on council owned land and properties, advertising on other assets including lollypop ladies uniforms, gritting lorries, other vehicles and publications.

For further information please contact:

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LABOUR GROUP
ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2014-15

Aims

- To be the frontline against the austerity agenda of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government
- To protect the poorest and most vulnerable people of the county
- To make the county more equal even in difficult times
- To maximise backroom savings to help protect frontline services

Introduction

The Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government has placed Cambridgeshire County Council in an appalling situation. The council has been forced to save £22 million in 2010-11, £50 million in 2011-12, £42 million in 2012-13 and £32 million in 2013-14. The council is now saving £38 million in 2014-15.

A Labour government would not have put Cambridgeshire County Council in this position. Although a Labour government would have made spending reductions, it would not have done so as deeply and quickly as the coalition government. The coalition's cuts are harming the poorest and most vulnerable people in Cambridgeshire. These cuts are increasing inequality. These cuts are threatening the council's financial position.

The coalition's austerity programme has hugely damaged services provided by the council. A further round of spending cuts now threatens statutory and essential services which support those most in need. Local government has now saved as much finance as possible. The coalition's cuts now show that their attack on public services and local government is driven by ideology not necessity.

All political groups on the council have a responsibility to contribute to a legal and balanced budget. This is especially important as the council moves into a democratic committee system which involves political groups cooperating for the benefit of the people of Cambridgeshire.

Our alternative budget proposals are financially balanced. We would make £11.182m in alternative savings and £11.182m in alternative spending commitments between 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Cambridgeshire Labour is keeping its manifesto promises to the voters. We are opposing unfair cuts to essential services and we are pushing to focus funding on the poorest areas. We propose to maximise savings in inward-facing shared services between councils, helping protect vital frontline services.

These are Cambridgeshire Labour's alternative budget proposals for equality. These proposals confirm there is a better way than the slash-and-burn austerity policies of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. These proposals provide one example to show how Labour will lead the country in a better, fairer and more prosperous direction.

Labour's alternative spending proposals (£11.182m)

Our alternative spending proposals fall into the following areas:

- A. Jobs and growth
- B. Community investment
- C. Children, young people and schools
- D. Adult services and welfare
- E. Transport and the environment

A. Jobs and growth

1. The living wage for county council employees

We propose paying all directly-employed employees of the county council the living wage. The living wage is set annually by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University and is calculated as £7.65 per hour for the year 2014-15.

By encouraging the public sector to pay a decent wage, we hope that the county council will act as a positive role model for the private sector. A living wage would also contribute to kick-starting economic recovery by putting money in people's pockets and reducing the cost of living.

In order to include agency-contracted workers, we will push to reform the county council's policy so that only living wage employers would win contracts.

The total annual cost of this policy for the county council is estimated at £418,000. This estimate assumes an employers' pension contribution rate of 20% which is the forecast rate for 2014-15.

2. More apprenticeships at the county council

We propose to increase the number of apprentices employed by the county council from 13 to 20, employing a further 7 apprentices.

In the context of cuts to county council staffing budgets, there is a danger that the council's administrative efficiency is being compromised. By employing more apprentices, we propose to increase efficiency while helping to create much-needed employment opportunities for young people in Cambridgeshire.

The county council currently employs thirteen apprentices not including those employed by schools. Associated costs include salaries, national insurance contributions and pension contributions. The county council currently pays the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices which currently stands at £2.68 per hour, rising to the National Minimum Wage after 12 months on any programme. The full-year cost to employ these thirteen apprentices is currently £237,000.

We would pay all our apprentices the living wage. Assuming that each new apprentice opted into the pension scheme, the policy would cost £129,000 annually.

B. Community investment

1. Improving our town centres

We would invest £250,000 to improve Cambridge city centre. The funds would be focused on improving highways and pavements and removing outdated features in public spaces in the

city centre. This would not only improve the city's local economy but would also improve accessibility for residents in narrow and busy streets. We are particularly concerned about the need to cater for persons with a disability, safe cycling and pedestrian traffic. This measure aims to ensure safe access to city spaces, shops and businesses.

This proposal builds upon plans drawn up by the Labour Group on Cambridge City Council to invest not only to improve the local economy in Cambridge but also accessibility for the disabled and elderly in the city centre.

2. Maintaining voluntary and community organisations including those transferred from Supporting People contracts (A/R.6.205)

The administration plans to review commitments to voluntary and community organisations in the context of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, social care priorities, any duplication of health provision, and whether there are better models to deliver social care at this level representing value for money. It plans to cut £283,000 in 2014-15.

The administration plans to make these savings by renegotiating contracts with Lifecraft, CRI Street Outreach Service, Cambridge City Homeless People Support, Wintercomfort Day Services, Richmond Fellowship and Mind Day Services, Richmond Fellowship Employment Services, Suffolk Mind Supported Accommodation Scheme, Metropolitan Supported Accommodation Service, Choices Counselling Service, CIAS MH Advocacy Services, Cambridge Cyrenians, The Ferry Project, Genesis Housing, and Riverside English Churches Housing Group.

However, officers report that there is likely to be an impact on frontline services. We believe that any impact in this vital area is unacceptable.

3. Maintaining arts and sport grant funding (B/R.6.141)

The administration plans to cut £20,000 in 2015-16 by reducing the arts and sport grant to external organisations. This money is often used as match funding to attract funding to Cambridgeshire from such organisations as the Arts Council and Sport England. We would not make this cut because we believe encouraging arts and sport participation plays an important part in driving up standards in public health and advancing wellbeing and community cohesion.

4. Maintaining community grants (B/R.6.143)

The administration plans to reduce community grants funding, given to local organisations for community activity, by £40,000 in 2015-16. Given the supposed commitment of the coalition government to the so-called 'Big Society', we are surprised at how willing the administration is to reduce investment in this area. We would not make this cut because we believe it is important to support community and voluntary activity rather than make empty gestures.

5. Maintaining library services (B/R.6.148)

The administration also plans to save £60,000 in 2014-15 and £316,000 in 2015-16 by reviewing library service infrastructure. However, officers warn that this could lead to library closures. We completely oppose these cuts. Libraries play an essential role in the community, encouraging access to learning for all age groups, promoting community involvement and providing crucial activities for the elderly. Libraries also provide an essential lifeline for the unemployed with job search, careers advice and associated benefits as they

seek paid work. The administration claims that it wants libraries to become 'community hubs' but seems happy to reduce opening hours and potentially close down libraries or transfer professional services into the voluntary sector.

C. Children, young people and schools

1. Maintaining children's centres (A/R.6.504)

The administration plans to reduce the children's centre budget from £6.269m to £4.769m, producing a saving of £1.25m in 2014-15. The administration plans to group children's centres under joint management arrangements, centralising some staffing and reducing opening hours.

We would make a saving of £500,000 because we accept the need for some restructuring. We oppose the bulk of the cut because we believe it makes children suffer for a vicious austerity programme they did nothing to cause and in relation to which they have no voice.

Officers predict that part of the universal service offer will be reduced with fewer universally accessible activity groups in some centres. Officers also predict that there will be a reduction across all staffing levels, including managers, family workers and business support.

Local centres will be forced to absorb these large reductions individually. Centres will need to rely more heavily on volunteers, a supply of labour which cannot always be predicted and in an area where professional training and expertise are essential.

2. Keeping the School Clothing Allowance (A/R.6.603)

The administration plans to cut £141,000 by abolishing the School Clothing Allowance. This involves an end to payments to parents of secondary school children for the purchase of uniform and shoes.

Officers concede this will increase costs for low-income families in sending their children to school and could affect families entitled to Disability Living Allowance who also receive the Employment Support Allowance. We therefore completely oppose this cut.

3. Keeping in-school support for vulnerable children (G/R.6.002)

The administration plans to cut £150,000 by reducing in-school support to encourage inclusion of vulnerable children in secondary school. Officers advise that this saving risks the council's ability to fulfil its 'champion' role for vulnerable children. We therefore completely oppose this cut.

4. Keeping Ex-Standards Funds (G/R.6.003)

The administration plans to save £60,000 through the cessation of projects in primary schools to promote inclusion. Officers advise schools may not be able to fund these projects themselves as budgets decline. We consider this scenario extremely likely as national government continues to pressurise school budgets. Anecdotal evidence suggests that primary schools are struggling to support inclusion. We believe that this cut will only worsen this situation and we will not support it.

D. Adult services and welfare

1. Opposing cuts to the Social Fund (A/4.1.004)

We oppose the administration's plans to reduce the Social Fund by £300,000. These funds will be crucial for victims of national government austerity, especially victims of the bedroom tax which has both Conservative and Liberal Democrat support.

2. Maintaining the LDP (A/R.6.107)

The administration proposes to save £1.3m by resetting the financial calculator for personal budgets to give a lower financial allocation, reducing expenditure used to meet substantial and critical needs. We believe the entire reduction is victimising the most vulnerable members of the community. We would review the service and save only £300,000 annually.

Officers predict that the administration's current plans will impact on the support and activities which people with learning disabilities will be able to include in their support plans. Officers also predict that people will be likely to find the changes difficult because it will reduce the amount of time per week they can spend in productive activities, leading potentially to increased isolation, boredom and frustration as well as an increase in challenging behaviours. There is also a risk that the reduced allocation will be insufficient to meet the assessed needs.

E. Transport and the environment

1. Restoring the Cambridge city centre shuttle bus service

Together with the Labour Group on Cambridge City Council, we continue to oppose the abolition of the city centre shuttle bus service. This service was removed to cut £300,000 from the budget.

We would reinstate this service because it served an area which the commercial transport network does not access and helped reduce congestion in Cambridge city centre. The service also improved accessibility especially for the elderly and disabled. Over the longer term, we would explore the possibility of partner funding to reduce the cost of the service for the county council.

2. Improving the county's roads, paths and cycle ways

We would invest £380,000 in improving the county's roads, paths and cycle ways. We would invest £190,000 in 2014-15 and £190,000 in 2015-16. Maintenance budgets have been drastically raided by the administration over recent years. This approach has proven extremely unpopular with the public and is holding back the county's economic development. By investing this money, we are responding to clear public concern about the terrible state of Cambridgeshire's highways. We would also reserve some funding to repainting road markings where they have worn.

3. Maintaining the Winter Maintenance Service (B/R.6.132)

The administration plans to reduce the Winter Maintenance Service by £50,000 in 2014-15 and £700,000 in 2015-16. We oppose this spending reduction because public consultations overwhelmingly show that the people of Cambridgeshire expect the council to prioritise its gritting service. Cuts to the gritting service risks increase the likelihood of traffic accidents and personal injuries during the winter months.

4. Protecting subsidised bus services (B/R.6.204)

We oppose the £837,000 reduction planned by the administration in 2014-15 in order to phase out bus subsidies. This is the final phase in a four-year programme to cut this budget. Although the budget will partly be replaced by £1.5m from Cambridgeshire Future Transport, we believe the county council's reduction will cause unnecessary pain among vulnerable groups in Cambridgeshire by increasing isolation across the county.

5. Protecting Park and Ride (B/R.7.026)

The administration plans to save £210,000 in 2014-15 and £100,000 in 2015-16 by introducing car parking charges at Park and Ride sites. We completely oppose these plans because they are almost certain to lead to fewer people using the sites and to increase congestion in Cambridge city centre. There is also a detrimental environmental impact by increasing traffic, noise and air pollution for Cambridge residents, defeating the purpose of Park and Ride sites in the first place.

Labour's alternative savings (£11.182m)

1. Increasing the county council's financial reserves at a slower pace

The administration currently plans to increase the county council's reserves from £5.406m (1% of the total budget) to £11.858m (2.4% of the total budget) by March 2014 and £14.846m (3% of the total budget) by March 2015. The administration will achieve the target for March 2014 by placing just over £3m in reserves with a further £3m provided by the one-off benefit of the Guided Busway settlement.

We believe it is right to increase the reserves as this strengthens the council's financial position at a time of economic uncertainty. However, we believe that the administration is increasing the reserves at too fast a pace while essential services are being cut.

We propose to increase the reserves from £5.406m to £6m in March 2014 and £6.799m in March 2015. This will provide a further £8.047m before March 2015 to invest in services. We believe that this approach balances the objectives of securing the county council's financial position while providing funds for essential services at a time of deep austerity.

We would review the target for the reserves in March 2015 in light of the economic situation and the financial settlement agreed with national government.

2. Letting a proportion of the property estate

The total book value of the county council's property estate stands at £900m, of which £600m relates to schools. We would let a proportion of the county council's property estate over the two financial years between 2014-5 and 2015-16 to produce a total target income stream of £300,000.

We would achieve this by letting the buildings and office spaces which will have been vacated by the county council. We would not seek to let any school-related property as demographic predictions dictate against this.

We believe that this target is achievable. Officers advise that the proposed £17m savings from managed disposals over the next 5 years are likely to increase as services look more closely at their premises and changes in service provision are made.

The Smarter Business Programme is also increasing virtual and flexible working and will maximise the efficiency of corporate assets. The Effective Property Asset Management within the Smarter Business Programme provides the capacity for achieving our target as a review of the office property portfolio is already underway.

3. Local Government Shared Services with district councils in Cambridgeshire

Although Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) has been rolled out between county councils since its inception in 2010, we propose to expand into sharing services with district councils in Cambridgeshire, particularly Cambridge City Council. This is highly desirable given that these several authorities share property and office space within the same towns and city. We propose to increase the indicative LGSS savings target for 2014-15 from £630,000 to £1.63m. This would save a further £1m annually.

In the context of Cambridge city, we seek to find a solution to the failure of the Conservative County Council and the Liberal Democrat City Council to cooperate in order to maximise backroom savings. Areas where internal services could be shared include procurement, office and property space, security and maintenance staff, among others.

4. Increasing the Park and Ride departure charge

The current departure charge paid by Stagecoach at Park and Ride sites in Cambridgeshire raises £250,000 per annum for the council. Although Stagecoach's fares have continually risen, the charge was set at £2 around a decade ago. We propose to increase the departure charge to £4, producing an annual income stream of £250,000.

5. Reducing the Communications Team

We would reduce the council's Communications Team, producing an annual saving of £100,000. At a time when the council is being forced to make huge cuts to frontline services, we believe the council should streamline this corporate function.

6. Reducing business mileage for employees

We propose to reduce business mileage for county council employees by 15% over the next 2 years, or 5% over and above the administration's target of 10% over 3 years. This saving crucially helps reduce the county council's carbon footprint. This saving can be achieved by reducing the actual number of miles travelled. We would not reduce the standard mileage rate currently set at 45p per mile.

A 15% reduction in the current non-traded mileage budget would save £404,000. Increasing the target from 10% to 15% would therefore save a further £135,000 over the administration. We believe this target is achievable given that the county council has reduced mileage by 15.4% between 2009-10 and 2012-13.

Financial summary

Spending proposals	2014-15 (£m)		2015-16 (£m)
A1	0.418		0.418
A2	0.129		0.129
B1		0.25	
B2	0.283		0.283
B3		0.02	
B4		0.04	
B5	0.06		0.376
C1	0.75		0.75
C2	0.141		0.141
C3	0.15		0.15
C4	0.06		0.06
D1	0.3		0.3
D2	1		1
E1	0.3		0.3
E2	0.19		0.19
E3	0.05		0.75
E4	0.837		0.837
E5	0.21		0.31
Total	5.128	6.054	11.182
Saving proposals	2014-15 (£m)		2015-16 (£m)
1		8.047	
2	0.15		0.15
3	1		1
4	0.25		0.25
5	0.1		0.1
6	0.0675		0.0675
Total	9.6145	1.5675	11.182

CONSERVATIVE ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS TO BUDGET

CABINET BUSINESS PLAN ALTERATIONS

Since Cabinet approved the Business Plan in January the alternative budget proposals from the Labour, Liberal Democrat and UKIP Groups have been considered and scrutinised by the Resources and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Additional information has been received in relation to the grants that the Council will receive in 2014/15 and revised projections on the level of local taxation to be collected by the district councils in the County has also been received. This information was shared with the other Groups as soon as it was received.

As a result of these items Cabinet have considered all the information at their disposal and have agreed to issue a slight alteration to the detailed proposals as agreed at the Cabinet meeting. These are set out below.

Additional Saving (£1m)

In light of the continued slippage in the capital programme we propose to reduce the capital financing provision in the base budget by £1m a year in order to fund some service based priorities set out below.

Proposal for funds reinvested in Children's Centres (£200k)

The proposals would mitigate the impact of proposed savings in Children's Centres, and enable the development of the service towards a more sustainable model less dependent on CCC funding.

Invest in Volunteering - Through the consultation there has been discussion about how resources within the community could be more readily marshalled to provide some of the universal provision often valued by families, for example, stay and play activities. Open access provision can often be a strong protective factor against isolation, but could be provided by volunteers rather than highly trained paid staff. Cambridgeshire County Council already invests in Home Start and Volunteers in Child Protection as examples of the type of voluntary organisation where significant added value can be demonstrated through the use of volunteers. Re-investment of £80k would be used to fund the voluntary sector to further develop a volunteer workforce across a network of Children's Centres and buildings to facilitate the continuation of some universal provision

Recalibration of funds to meet needs in more rural areas - The current proposal sees a shift in resource to becoming more targeted, moving towards a 70:30 split in favour of the most deprived communities. This inevitably has a greater impact in more rural areas where need is less concentrated. Reinvestment of £120k could seek to provide additional funds into those Children's Centres serving more affluent and rural areas, which could be used to increase the outreach functions from those Centres to ensure that the targeted offer is not diluted in communities where families are harder to identify. This additional resource could be allocated directly to those Centres, based on an agreed formula for distribution. Centres which would be prioritised would be: Cottenham and Swavesey; Bassingbourn, Comberton, Melbourn and Gamlingay; Bottisham Burwell and Soham; Ely, Littleport and Witchford; Ramsey Sawtry and Yaxley; Sawston and Linton. £120k would equate to approximately 3.0 FTE Family Workers distributed across all centres.

Proposal for funds reinvested in Mental Health (£200k)

£40k would be used to fund the Reablement/Intensive Support accommodation project to develop a local alternative to residential care placements. This will be done by enhancing staffing levels and development of an office and will enable the diversion of people from higher cost residential care placements, more rapid step-down to lower level, local community support and enable people to continue links with their local community. This will aid in the meeting of savings targets in mental health through a diversion from spend on residential care.

£60k would be used to protect preventative services within the third sector/voluntary sector. The third sector support people with mental health issues through Wellbeing (day/employment) Services, and homeless services. The services are under pressure due to both reductions in the statutory services and in reductions in funding. Additional funding would aid services with their financial stability so that they can support those people who are not being supported by statutory services and prevent deterioration in mental wellbeing and associated risks of losing accommodation or hospital admission.

£70k would support high cost care packages. Mental health care packages (residential care/nursing homes) can have a very high weekly cost. There is evidence that overall pressure in the system will lead to additional costs for the next financial year. This additional funding will enable placement of individuals in the most appropriate resource within budget. There would be reviews to ensure step-down to lower cost placements at the earliest opportunity.

£20k additional funding would be used for complex drug and alcohol rehabilitation following detoxification treatment (for cases that have a dual diagnosis of substance misuse and mental health). This will address an identified need and will enable independence and a reduction in the use of crisis services and use of social care and health services.

Final £10k would contribute to an LD/PD initiative for an Advice Information and Support worker based at a local centre run by the National Autism Society to support people with aspergers/autism. Expected outcomes - Social care needs met for people living with autism, including young people in transition to adulthood; more people with autism in settled accommodation, paid employment and with improved health outcomes and community support; and less call on emergency services to deal with crises.

Proposal for funds reinvested in Learning Disability / Physical Disability (£100k)

£20k would be used for an additional post through the National Autistic Society around the vulnerable adult work for people with aspergers and autism. A further £10k would be contributed to the post from Mental Health. The post would signpost people to LD, PD & MH services if eligible but it would be mainly supporting young adults to access universal services such as housing, employment/training and providing support to try and resolve home/family/social relationship issues so they do not need to enter the social care system. It is in line with the autism strategy of enabling access to universal services and resolving issues before they become critical. This is a preventative measure.

£16k would be used to increase management capacity and support to the PD/SS team, and £64k to fund front line staff capacity to manage the change to the transitions team proposed as part of the business plan, whilst maintaining current front line capacity in the existing LDP teams. This will help to increase the number of reviews carried out and help to manage any waiting times for assessment.

Proposal for funds reinvested in Older People (£200k)

In order to tackle waiting lists for older people who have been referred and are awaiting an assessment we will use £150k to recruit additional front line staff who will work flexibly across the county to tackle specific problem areas, within a peripatetic team. The intention is to recruit staff who will be well placed to work with the Head of Operations and Team Managers to focus in on where waiting lists have developed, prioritise meeting high priority needs and to provide capacity to see what can be done quickly in relation to those with lower levels of need who may need a short intervention rather than a full assessment, such as some equipment or assistive technology.

£50k will be used to put some additional capacity into the setting up of the joint CCC CCG 'brokerage unit'. This unit will act as a single point of contracting for those eligible for NHS and council funded care as well as self-funders who wish to purchase beds, thereby enabling a stronger negotiating position. This will help to deliver the savings that have been associated with the unit. It will also free up front line capacity to do more case work.

Transport Initiatives (£500k)

We have listened to the issues and concerns raised by the other political groups around the issue of funding of transport initiatives. In recognition of these concerns, but also mindful of the limited resources that the Council has at its disposal we are proposing to invest £0.5m in transport in Cambridgeshire.

We recently top sliced the fuel grant for bus companies by 10% (some money that was delegated to us by Government). The Cabinet propose to use this (it is ring fenced for public transport) to create a £28k innovation grant to stimulate ideas to come from all quarters to look at innovative new ways of providing public transport services.

We propose that the use of the £0.5m funding should be agreed by a cross party group. Our proposal is that this resource would be utilised to bring forward the best proposals to benefit transport initiatives for the people of Cambridgeshire. The Cabinet wish to make it clear that this resource is intended to find the most appropriate new use for this money and not simply to re-introduce a subsidy to buses or reinstate a city shuttle service.

Winter Gritting (£200k)

Members will be aware, from the Integrated Resources and Performance Reports, that all of the allocated Winter Gritting budget for the current financial year has not been fully utilised because the weather has been mild (wet, but mild!). In the past we have treated that situation as a last minute windfall for roads maintenance. The Cabinet therefore propose to transfer this sum into an earmarked reserve to allay the introduction of cuts to winter gritting. This is a one-off proposal that does not affect the on-going General Fund base budget.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 18 FEBRUARY 2014

ORAL QUESTION TIME

1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates, from Councillor D Jenkins

The A14 the bane of our existence is going to go through a lot of improvements soon. It cuts through south of Girton and south of Impington and makes the lives of people who live close to it pretty miserable. In 1975 the Department of Transport promised the people living alongside the A14 noise barriers to shelter them from the A14. They never delivered on that promise. Now fast forward to today and we are talking about step one in the improvement programme which is called the 'Pinch Point Programme', which is simply the widening of lanes around the Girton clover leaf and along to Histon. The Highways Agency of these days have done their sums on snapshots before and snapshots against afterwards and they are saying the increment increased decibels in a lady's window will not be sufficient to trigger their obligation to put up noise barriers. However, if you were to compare the noise in 1975 to the noise just after the Pinch Point Programme has been implemented, then the increase in sound would have been massive and would have justified the barriers. So there is a clear moral obligation on the Highways Agency to deliver on what the Department of Transport promised in 1975. May I request this Council to press that case aggressively both directly with the Highways Agency and through their contacts with the local MP's?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates

Just for Members information there was a meeting recently with Sir Jim Paice who is the MP for this area and some members of this Chamber attended that meeting. I've been in contact with his office and it is the intention of the MP to write to the Minister on this particular subject and I have agreed to support his position. I think there are two positions, if you don't mind me adding one. I think the one you have just explained about the moral position and the second one actually is about bringing things forward, if appropriate. So I'm content to write and support the local MP in this matter.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates, from Councillor D Jenkins

I am just going to point out that this is the first time ever that I've been called first for oral questions, so thank you for that. It is also the first time ever that the Cabinet Member has asked the second question for me so I don't have to ask it again. So you've got the two points haven't you and (to confirm) I was at the meeting with Mr Paice as well. Thank you very much.

2. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis, from Councillor P Downes

My question is to the Leader of the Council and he is aware of this. I feel slightly embarrassed about asking this question in the light of the first announcement by the Chairman congratulating the LGSS IT on their services. Because I have to say I've

been extremely disappointed by the IT services that we've had over recent weeks. On several occasions the system has gone down one for five days, another for three days and other odd days and the reason why it has given me concern is that the job of a Councillor has evolved very rapidly in recent years and we've now built in the expectation that we can get quick access and quick response and it's extremely frustrating when you are trying your best to do a decent job, working with colleagues, working with officers and working with the public and you are frustrated by when the tool you are supposed to use is not working. What really upsets me about this is that our constituents have got used to a certain level of response from us as their Councillors and when it breaks down they don't know that we have not received their message. When we go away on holiday or whenever we put an 'out of office' on and we say we're away and we'll deal with it when we get back. But when they write to us and we've got no way of accessing it, they think that we are just ignoring them and that does the Council a disservice and it doesn't help them. So I'm asking you, Leader, if you will use your good offices working with officers to see if we can get a more reliable way of having this service. I don't understand the technology of it, it's something to do with Juniper and Java not talking to each other and goodness knows who they are, but it's all to do with an oracle but I have to say my oracle is particularly delphic. So can I ask you to do whatever you can to make this service more reliable for us all.

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis

Thank you, I know you have been struggling with this for a couple of weeks, I know you have copied me in on a number of e-mails and Mark Lloyd has assured me that they working hard to try and sort the problem out so I do understand. I just want to make a point that when I go on holiday I take my Blackberry with me and I still check my e-mails. None of this is easy, I know they are working on it but the other part, the big success we've had those of us that have BYOD, looks like we will be able to continue using BYOD and not have it taken off us. That's a huge bonus actually because those of us who use iPads it's a great tool, but they are working really hard to try and sort that and I will keep chasing it.

Note: The Chairman indicated that the issue that Councillor Downes had explained reflected a problem experienced by many Councillors and needed to be addressed sooner, rather than later.

3. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis, from Councillor Sir P Brown

We have parked the debate on Unitary Authorities, I think we have all agreed that it isn't going to happen, if we want it to happen, for some time. So I want to ask Councillor Curtis his views on local authorities in the future but I would also ask him, bearing in mind that I have counted up within the County there are getting on for 1200 to 1300 local Councillors, either Parish, District, Town or County. Throughout the County there are about 1300, can he perhaps devise a way of making all our local Councillors becoming more effective within the County for the good of the County and our constituents?

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis

The answer is no because very much of that is down to the individual, but it is true that Councillors need to learn to communicate and it is a two way process, it's about Councillors communicating to the public, as well as listening to the public

communicating to them. Yes we are somebody that acts as a sounding board to the public and act as a representative of our public to our Council, good Councillors also act as a representative of the Council to the public as well and Councillors have to think about how they do that. My view about local Government of the future is actually pretty much ensconced in the 'Rewiring of the Public Services Agenda', which I'm a real fan of. The reality of our Country and this was shown to us yesterday at the East of England Leaders' meeting that we are the most centralised Country in the modernised world. I think something like 1.7% of tax revenue is raised locally. There's nowhere ever, not even France, who everybody talks about as this grand example of centralisation that is that low and those are the things that we have to change, so we can genuinely start to influence Cambridgeshire for the better and that's my agenda going forwards. We need to get into how we make Cambridgeshire better by integrating all those disparate public services that actually spend money in silos across the County and get them working better together that's my vision for public services. I don't think the argument about more or less Councillors is the right one, it is an argument about the right Councillors, I'll let the electorate decide that, that is my vision, I've said before in terms of Unitaries, I can see both sides of the argument. I've done some work in one County that did move to a Unitary and actually one of the difficulties with it, was that because the distance on some of the operational day to day decision making was taken further away from the electorate, it caused some huge issues and you can't ignore that as an issue and say actually we'll go Unitary as it will save loads of money at the expense of democracy, you have to think about the wider issues.

4. Question to the Cabinet Member Education and Learning, Councillor D Harty, from Councillor I Manning

What are we doing as a Council to support schools, especially primary schools in the Government's 'Year of Code' initiative?

Reply from the Cabinet Member Education and Learning, Councillor D Harty

Can I thank Councillor Manning for the question. He did pose it to me this morning and I haven't had chance yet to reach who I need to reach to give me some information. I will come back to him and write to him.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member Education and Learning, Councillor D Harty, from Councillor I Manning

Chair, just for anyone who is not aware, the 'Year of Code,' otherwise known as another attempt by Michael Gove to get children writing program codes, unfortunately it's being fronted by someone who doesn't actually understand code themselves. The supplementary was: will Councillor Harty work with me to try and get some support into those schools, I'm perfectly happy to give him my professional time and to work with 'Rewired State' which is an organisation that does a lot of this stuff already and perhaps we could be an example for the rest of the Country on how to do this properly?

Reply from the Cabinet Member Education and Learning, Councillor D Harty

Yes I will, I agree

5. Question to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire, from Councillor A Taylor

Note: Microphone was not turned on at the beginning of this question by Councillor Taylor but the start of the question related to not having given advance notice of the question.

My question is what is going on with our street lighting contracts and I'm actually very interested to hear what you think as the portfolio holder for the service? We are in the middle of the second phase of Balfour Beatty street lighting contract in Queen Edith's which is my division and I would like to know whether you are satisfied with Balfour Beatty's performance in terms of communication and consultation with our residents? Also whether you consider that the contracts that were agreed with Balfour Beatty had sufficient safeguards to ensure special needs of vulnerable people? I've been having meetings over the last few weeks with groups of residents who are distressed about the changes in their streets, as well as with Balfour Beatty. We're finding that we are coming up against a brick wall, both in terms of some heritage lights that residents wish to protect, but also about community safety issues and in one particular street where a light is being removed against the wishes of elderly and disabled people. The group of disabled people are in a street with a high level of burglaries. We have asked for a different light, whether lights can be repositioned, but the answer has been no. Can we narrow the gaps between the lights? *(again the answer was)* No. In the heritage lights area, the residents have been told a particular date for when the lights are going and would like to explore options. They are willing to explore what funding options might be available to see how they can fund some replacement lights which fit the character of the historic streets that they are in, in Blinco Grove, and they have been told it's next Friday. You can't come up with money to do that sort of thing in just a week, particularly as this week is half term week in Cambridge and naturally there are quite a lot of families living there. I am very, very concerned that they are going to come back from their half term holiday and find their street lights gone. Meanwhile when they contact Balfour Beatty they get a reply "we will contact you within 10 workings days". I would just like to ask the portfolio holder whether he is satisfied with the performance of our contractor?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire

Chairman there is quite a lot in that particular question because as Councillor Taylor says, I didn't have advance notice of the question. I can't give her a specific answer related to Queen Edith's. The disappointment I've got in the question is that you have not once said that you, as the local County Councillor, whether you have made any attempt to talk to our people on our side of it, not just Balfour Beatty, because I would suggest you do that. Tom Blackburne-Maze is the officer, so if there are any specific issues and you're unhappy about the way Balfour Beatty are behaving then I would recommend you talk to him and me if necessary outside of this meeting, and we will see if we can resolve it. If I, and I am going to be honest Members, had the opportunity to rewrite that Contract, I would. Clearly there have been difficulties with that Contract and many of us know from bitter experience in the early days the consultation was really bad. It has improved, I think we have to be fair, it has improved, but it is still not perfect and Balfour Beatty I do know have taken on extra resources to try to address some of this. Because Queen Edith's is in the City, the City like other parishes get informed that we are coming in. We are working closely with the City and some of the issues can be resolved by further discussion with the City, particularly when it comes to heritage lights and that sort of thing and I know those discussions are going on. So my suggestion to you Councillor Taylor is that we will pick this up. If you want to talk specifically about Queen Edith's, then I suggest

you initially talk to Tom Blackburne-Maze about it. I'm happy to get involved and if that means a meeting and I know there are other Members here who will tell you that where necessary I've met with their Parish Councils and we've had a meeting and tried to resolve some of the problems. Happy to do that, but I can't be specific. Yes if I had the opportunity to re-write that Contract I would, we are learning a lot of lessons from it, a lot has been learnt and it is improving. If you look at the overall size of the contract and the size of the task generally, in fairness to both sides, the County Council and Balfour Beatty, actually the number of complaints is relatively small, but that does not make any of them right, because if any one individual has problems, it's clearly a significant matter. I hope and I've said this in other forums, I hope Members here will, whenever our parish councillors have been informed that the street lighting people are going in to do something, work closely with our parish councillors. I've made that offer to my parish councillors and I've already worked with some of them.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire, from Councillor A Taylor

Note: Beginning of text unclear as microphone not turned on "I have been engaging with Balfour Beatty" but what I'm finding is that the Councillor seems to be referring to getting back to Balfour Beatty all the time and Balfour Beatty have come to speak to my residents on behalf of me, the words were "you can hide behind me", well quite honestly as representatives of local people I don't think it's right for Councillors to be asked to hide behind contractors, we need to have some responsibility taken by this Council. I would ask if you could contact Balfour Beatty particularly about their consultation procedures because I don't think it's good enough on a short timeframe for people to be getting an auto message being told that they will be got back to in two weeks. I might have to go to other offices apart from Mr Blackburne-Maze because although he is asking us to talk to each other this week, he's actually on holiday.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire

Notwithstanding the holiday Chairman, and as I've said, we have already pushed Balfour Beatty consistently about their poor communications and they are improving. But I still suggest that when Tom Blackburne-Maze comes back from holiday we jointly meet with him.

6. Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates, from Councillor J Reynolds

I want to ask Councillor Bates about flooding in Girton. People may recall that over the last few years we've seen a number of flooding episodes in one part of Girton. This has affected twenty homes or more and a certain amount of additional farmland and land in general. The Environment Agency along with others have been quite good at trying to find solutions. There are three problems basically one of them is pipes that run in the drain and cause blockage, one of them is the actual bridge that goes over the Oakington Road and the other final issue is about dredging. You've heard a lot about these issues in the last few months but what does concern people is there doesn't seem to be much progress with carrying out some of these particular areas of activity. The first one of course is actually to do with those pipes now not going to be undertaken until later this year. Can the Portfolio Holder do something to speed up this process so local people can see that this Council and all of its other partners are actually doing something that solves a problem?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates

I can only in part answer your question which is about the pipes. My understanding is that they will be sorted and it has been reached in agreement that they will be dealt with in August. Now that may not be satisfactory to the residents, the other two issues I will go back to the Environment Agency who are leading on this issue. It's obviously not a County Council issue. We are not leading, but the Environment Agency are leading and there have been meetings with residents and with officers of the County Council on these issues and I'm content to actually go back to the Environment Agency and press them further as you're requesting, to see if we can't actually move things forward in a more speedy manner to solve the problem. While I'm on about flooding Chairman, I think it's also worth mentioning that we have against some of the issues in the Country been very lucky in this County against the likes of Somerset and around the Thames Valley, so I think we need to just remember that as well, I appreciate that's not part of the question, but I will press the Environment Agency for a more speedy response.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates, from Councillor J Reynolds

Thanks very much for that comment I hope you're successful, because people locally want to see success. I'm conscious that the Prime Minister made some announcements on a number of occasions quite recently about financing flooded areas. Can the portfolio holder convince me that the monies that have been promised will come to solve this problem in my area before the winter?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates

No I cannot give that reassurance. I don't have a direct line to No.10 at the moment. I can't reassure him about the finance on this matter. There have been lots of discussions about the role of the Environment Agency and as we go forward, things like dredging I think will become an issue and that is a policy for national government and not necessarily a local decision. Both myself and Councillor Mason sit on the Regional Flood Defence Committee for the Environment Agency and certainly I have already contacted the Environment Agency about some of the issues which I think need to be resolved about priorities, about dredging and other matters, such as prioritising finance. So it is on my agenda, quite whether it is on the Environment Agency's agenda I don't know, but the central manager for the Environment Agency has indicated that she would wish to come and talk to me about the future. So I look forward to that discussion with her.

7. Question to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire, from Councillor S van de Ven

This is about concessionary fares and the cost to the Authority of this system. We of course get a reimbursement from central government for most of the cost, but I believe that we are about £750k short and I think this part year the system cost us about a million (*pounds*), you can correct me if I'm wrong. Obviously the concessionary fare system is hugely important to those who need it, but equally it's not needs based, it's age based and although I haven't got my pass yet, I'm sure there will be people here in this Chamber who do have their passes and the question I am trying to get to is: Do you think that we need to be more informative to potential users of the concessionary bus pass about the cost to the authority and the ways in which

we are struggling with other essential transport services that actually don't have huge budgets which are more in the 100,000's rather than in the millions? So my question is: should we be doing more to inform people?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure, Councillor M McGuire

Chairman the straightforward answer to that question is yes and I think when this all party group meets to talk about how we fund for instance community transport, part of which includes concessionary fares, then that is something we ought to consider. because as Councillor van de Ven says and she quite rightly points out we are effectively shortfalled by Government in terms of the funding. It's actually to the tune of a million pounds. It's not as if they didn't know what it would cost prior to it becoming a responsibility of the County Council a couple of years ago, because they were aware from the Districts when they were running it. That is one of the problems and of course we do have to inform people as to what their rights are and what is actually added. We have given certain benefits over and above the actual basic scheme and as with anything, where you give more than people may be entitled to, you are then in a difficult position of continuing funding that and then you take something away and we all know the effect that has. So I think you are absolutely right and I think that it's something that we should put down on our agenda, whoever is on that group to consider, because we need to make sure that not just those people, but the other people who are responsible, the likes of community transport where concessionary fares is an element that we grant fund and a couple of the districts do as well, that people understand what the purpose of that is, because it is a national scheme but we have to administer it, but we administer it at a cost.

8. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis, from Councillor E Cearns

In the spirit of what Councillor Curtis was saying as an interface between the public and the Council, I took it upon myself to put an enquiry on twitter and 'Shape Your Place', which can prove to be a useful form of community engagement. I have found and I was told that the Group Leaders in the past decided what flags the Council flies, which I found quite a strange response. Isn't it time that we review the decision and actively support 'Lesbian, **Gay**, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT) **History Month**' and wider equality and diversity by flying the rainbow flag in future February's.

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis

It's a Group Leader's decision, I'm quite happy to take it to Group Leaders. I don't know how that will work under the new arrangements, but I'm quite happy to do that.

Supplementary Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis, from Councillor E Cearns

Why is it Group Leaders shouldn't this actually be a free vote, I'm doing this on behalf of the LGBT community that I feel should be represented and I'm here elected and I think everybody should have an opportunity to have a vote on this.

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Curtis

The reality and one of the things I've warned about in the forthcoming year is burying our committees in unnecessary work. There comes a time and place where you have

to take an honest way and find an honest way of dealing with minor issues like this without going through huge bureaucratic systems. If your Group Leaders want to consult with you before we discuss things like this, they can, but sometimes decisions have to be made in a nice, simple, effective way. I promise you if we make every single decision something that is subjected to a vote in this Council or in a committee meeting, this Council is going to grind to a halt. It is my biggest, biggest fear about where we are going too next year and you need to be mindful of that when you stand up and say these things. I absolutely understand the reason why you are making the representation, but just think about what a sensible way of getting a decision like that made is and putting decisions every single decision through this Council and through formal votes isn't a productive way forward, but we will discuss it at Group Leaders.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 18 FEBRUARY 2014

WRITTEN QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.2

Question from Councillor S van de Ven to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Infrastructure – Councillor Mac McGuire

Please can the Cabinet member explain what impact the decline and potential collapse of Cambridgeshire County Council grant funding will have on each of Cambridgeshire's Community Transport operators? In the longer term, what does he reckon will be the impact on people who rely on community transport and will this bring new social care and health needs?

Response from the Highways and Community Infrastructure – Councillor Mac McGuire

1. The Council has had to take some hard decisions in order to manage the very difficult budget position that it finds itself in. It is only right that spending that is discretionary is considered very carefully in order to protect core statutory services. Grant funding and other support to Community Transport Operators is discretionary spending and therefore the Council has to consider whether it can be sustained.
2. Part of this consideration has been the Community Impact Assessment for the proposed reductions. This accepts that there will be some potential impact on sections of the community from this proposal. However this will depend on the level to which the individual community transport organisations can absorb the reduction in grant funding. The proposal in the business plan has been structured to allow community transport organisations time to make this adjustment.
3. Community Transport Operators have other sources of income, including subscriptions and fares, some operate home to school transport contracts on behalf of the County Council and there are also opportunities to bid for work contracts through the Cambridgeshire Future Transport programme. These contracts allow the operators to spread their overheads over a wider base.
4. I am pleased to be able to say that we have now been able to identify some additional funds that we propose to earmark for community transport, and that I propose to form a cross party group to consider how we can best use these funds to deliver transport for our more isolated communities.
5. I look forward to working with all parties to develop a solution to the provision of community transport that is sustainable in the long term.