

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 29th March 2011

Time: 10.30 – 16.05

Place: Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillor L J Oliver (Chairman)

Councillors: S Austen, J Batchelor, I Bates, N Bell, K Bourke, B Brooks-Gordon, D Brown, F Brown, P Brown, C Carter, K Churchill, J Clark, N Clarke, S Criswell, S Count, M Curtis, P Downes, J Dutton, R Farrer, N Guyatt, S Gymer, G Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, G Heathcock, S Hoy, W Hunt, C Hutton, J Jenkins, S Johnstone, E Kadić, G Kenney, S Kindersley, S King, I Manning, L McGuire, V McGuire, A Melton, L Nethsingha, A Orgee, J Palmer, D Pegram, A Pellew, J Powley, P Read, P Reeve, J Reynolds, K Reynolds, T Sadiq, S Sedgwick-Jell, M Shuter, M Smith, T Stone, S Tierney, J Tuck, S van de Ven, R West, F Whelan, S Whitebread, K Wilkins, M Williamson, G Wilson, L Wilson and F Yeulett

Apologies: Councillors: R Butcher, V Lucas and C Shepherd

144. MINUTES: 15th FEBRUARY 2011

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

145. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests under Paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct:

Councillor	Minute	Details
Austen	157; General	Member of COPE (Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise), substitute Member of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Committee
Bell	154; 150	Member of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority; Network Railcard holder
Brown F	154	Wind Farms; Member of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority
Clark	154	Member of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority
Curtis	157	Governor of Sir Harry Smith Community College; Trustee of Age UK Cambridgeshire
Dutton	General	Member of Huntingdonshire District Council Development Management Panel
Gymer	154	Member of the Fire Authority

Heathcock	General	Member of COPE,
	150	Member of Railfuture East Anglia,
	154	Member of Fire Authority
Hutton	157	Governor of Longsands Learning Partnership
Jenkins	157	Non-executive Director of Cambridge Community Services
Johnstone	150;	Conservative appointee to Local Government
	154	Association Economy & Transport Programme Board;
		Member of the Cambridgeshire Police Authority
Kenney	157	Member of COPE
McGuire L	157	Wife works for a caring agency; Member of
	154	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority
McGuire V	157	work for a caring agency
Melton	154	daughter is a serving Police officer
Pegram	154	Chairman of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority
Read	157	Member of COPE and a member of East
	General	Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Committee
Reynolds J	General	Director and Chairman of Renewables East
Tierney	157	Fenland Residents against Turbines Group
Tuck	150	Board Member of Fenland Association of Community Transport
van de Ven	150;	Member of Rail Future, Chairman of Meldreth, Shepreth
	157	and Foxton Rail User Group, Families and Friends Network Rail card holder
Whelan	157;	Associate member of COPE, Parent of two children at
	157	Comberton Village College
Wilkins	157;	Associate member of COPE; Member of the
	154	Cambridgeshire Police Authority
Yeulett	157	Governor of Neale-Wade Community College

The following Councillors declared a personal interest as holders of concessionary bus passes, in relation to item 157a: S Austen, F Brown, P Brown, J Clark, P Downes, J Dutton, G Harper, J Jenkins, G Kenney, D Pegram, J Powley, P Read, J Reynolds, S Sedgwick-Jell and T Stone.

147. REPORT OF THE COUNTY RETURNING OFFICER

Members noted that Councillor S Count was elected to fill the vacancy in the March North Electoral Division in the by-election held on 3rd March 2011.

148. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Council noted three questions received from members of the public as set out in **Appendix B**.

149. PETITIONS

The Council noted that two petitions had been received from members of the public, as set out in **Appendix C**. The Chairman thanked all the petitioners and advised that the Leader of the Council would respond in writing.

150. ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION FROM CABINET

(a) Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck, and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram, that the recommendation on the Local Transport Plan as set out in minute 317 of the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 22nd February 2011 and the final version of the Plan, be approved.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor K Bourke and seconded by Councillor K Wilkins:

That after the current recommendation in the report add the words “except for the £1,000,000 allocated to the Guided Busway”.

So the recommendation reads:

That the County Council adopts the Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan, except for the £1,000,000 allocated to the Guided Busway.

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

[The voting pattern was as follows: Liberal Democrats, Labour, UKIP and Green in favour, Conservatives against, Chairman and Vice Chairman, Independent and one Conservative abstained].

Following discussion, the substantive motion, as detailed below, on being put to the vote was carried:

It was resolved:

To approve the Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan.

[The voting pattern was as follows: Conservatives in favour, two Liberal Democrats, Labour, UKIP, Independent and Green against, Chairman and Vice Chairman, Liberal Democrats and one Conservative abstained].

151. ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Amendments made to the Council’s Code of Development Control Practice

It was proposed by the Chairman of the Standards Committee, David Boreham, and seconded by Councillor K Churchill that the recommendations of the Standards Committee on changes to the Code of Development Control Practice, be approved.

Following discussion it was resolved unanimously:

- (a) To approve the proposed amendments to the Code of Development Control Practice, as set out in Appendix D.
- (b) That the Monitoring Officer amend the published Constitution accordingly.

[The voting pattern was as follows: Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, Green, UKIP and Independent in favour, Chairman and Vice Chairman abstained].

(b) Report on the future of the Ethical Standards regime

It was proposed by the Chairman of the Standards Committee, David Boreham, and seconded by Councillor Churchill that the recommendations of the Standards Committee on the adoption of a voluntary Code of Conduct if and when the current statutory requirement was repealed, be adopted.

Following discussion, it was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) note the proposed changes to the Standards regime, as set out in the report
- (b) agree in principle that the Council should adopt a voluntary Code of Conduct for its Members, if and when the current statutory requirement was repealed.

[The voting pattern was as follows: Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, UKIP and Independent in favour, Chairman and Vice Chairman, two Conservatives and one Liberal Democrat abstained]

152. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Two written questions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.4, as set out in **Appendix E**.

153. ORAL QUESTIONS

Nineteen oral questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9.1, as set out in **Appendix F**. In response to these questions, the following items were identified for further action:

- Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, agreed to write to Councillor F Whelan, on the likely completion date of a secondary school in Cambourne, and the implications in the intervening period for children in the Comberton Village College catchment area
- The Leader, Councillor J Tuck, agreed to respond to Councillor I Manning regarding responses to letters from Cambridge City Council Leader, Councillor S Reid, dated 14/01/11 and 19/03/11, relating to libraries and the shuttle bus respectively
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor L McGuire,

agreed to write to Councillor S Gymer, regarding the adoption of roads, providing that Councillor Gymer gave him the location of the specific roads in question.

154. QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY ISSUES

Councillors S Johnstone, representing Cambridgeshire Police Authority, and D Pegram, representing Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority, responded to questions and comments on Police and Fire issues, in accordance with the guidelines agreed by the Council. These are set out in **Appendix G**.

155. MOTIONS

Three motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

(a) Motion from the Chairman, Councillor L Oliver

It was proposed by Councillor L Oliver and seconded by Councillor T Sadiq that:

This Council recognises the unique contribution that Marshall of Cambridge (Holdings) Limited has made to Cambridgeshire for more than 100 years and resolves to write to Sir Michael Marshall expressing thanks for their continued contributions, both in terms of supporting the local economy through employment opportunities and the supply of goods and services and also be providing direct and indirect investment in the local community.

In recognition of this, the Council's common seal shall be fixed to a copy of this resolution for presentation to them.

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

[The voting pattern was unanimous].

(b) Motion from Councillor K Bourke

With the consent of Council, Councillor K Bourke withdrew his motion asking Council to support a Scrutiny review of road maintenance.

(c) Motion from Councillor S Whitebread

It was proposed by Councillor S Whitebread and seconded by Councillor B Brooks-Gordon that:

The Council notes:

- The City Centre Circular shuttle bus in Cambridge was introduced in conjunction with the pedestrianisation of the city centre, to give access to the centre of town for the less mobile;
- The decision of the County Council to remove all subsidised bus services over the next four years, with funding for the city shuttle planned to end in April this year;
- The high level of patronage, with 67,076 passenger journeys last year, and a petition of over 1,000 signatures against cutting the services;

- That removing this services goes directly against the Council’s new priority of “Helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities”.

Council additionally notes that:

- Because of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in place, it is not possible to replace this service with a Community Transport scheme or run it on a commercial basis;
- Transport Minister Norman Baker has publicly acknowledged this, and indicated that government is investigating ways to protect free bus services, including maintaining the Bus Service Operators Grant and giving Councils more flexibility over TROs;
- More time is needed to explore options for retaining the service, given these developments.

Therefore Council requests Cabinet to suspend its decision to cease the city shuttle for one year, to enable it to secure a funding model less onerous on the Council, with the intention of permanently retaining the service.

Following discussion, under Part 4, Rules of Procedure, paragraph 15.5 of the Constitution, more than 14 Members requested a recorded vote on this matter, which is set out in Appendix H. Before the close of the voting process, Cllr Sir Peter Brown indicated to the Chairman that he had inadvertently pressed the wrong voting button, and with the consent of the Chairman, the vote was re-commenced . The motion, on being put to the Council by recorded vote was declared lost with 19 votes for, 34 against and 2 abstentions.

156. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor L Oliver, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor J Powley and agreed unanimously to make the appointments to Committees and outside organisations as set out in **Appendix J**.

157. MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

(a) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 22nd February

The Council noted the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 22 February, which included items on:

- Integrated Offender Management
- Improving the education and training of professionals to help alcohol misusers
- Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan
- Annual Public Health report for Cambridgeshire 2010
- Integrated Resources and Performance Report 2010
- Prescribed alteration to increase the size of Peckover Community Primary School, Wisbech
- On Street Parking Charges Review, Cambridge

- Final details on English National Concessionary Fares Travel Scheme (ENCTS) for Cambridgeshire
- County Farms Estate: wind farm development.

Members commented and asked questions of the relevant Cabinet members about these items. No matters were raised that required further action.

(b) Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 15th March 2011

The Council noted the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 15 March 2011. Members commented and asked questions of the relevant Cabinet members about these items. No items were agreed for further action.

- Review of Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative
- Amended Home to School Transport policy
- Objection to proposed Traffic Regulation Order: Mill Road, Lode
- Integrated Resources and Performance Report
- Performance Management Framework
- Corporate Risk Register Framework Update
- Consumer Credit Act – delegation of enforcement
- Adult Social Care exemption from contract regulations for the delivery of social care
- Building Schools for the Future Fenland: Phase 2
- Modification to arrangements to provide planning advice to the Joint Development Control Committee
- Local Government Shared Services Update: Finance and Performance report
- Civil Parking Enforcement
- Cambridgeshire Guided Busway.

Members commented and asked questions of the relevant Cabinet members about these items. No matters were raised that required further action.

158. VOTES OF THANKS

- (a) It was agreed to place on record the Council's appreciation of the professional advice they had received from Stephen Moir, Corporate Director: Strategy and Democracy who was leaving the Council on 31st March.
- (b) As it was her last meeting as the Leader of the Council, the Council agreed to place on record its appreciation of Councillor J Tuck's contribution during her time as Leader. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups paid tribute to Councillor Tuck.
- (c) It was also agreed to place on record thanks to the Chairman of the Council for her handling of the last Council meeting, in particular the debate on the Integrated Plan and Council Budget for 2011/12.

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011
CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

PEOPLE

The death of former County Councillor Norah Bedford at the age of 105, who served as County Council Member for Stretham. She was a past president of the Little Thetford Women’s Institute and a parish councillor.

A cremation will be held at Cambridge Crematorium at 11.15 am on Friday April 1 followed by a service of celebration at Little Thetford Church at 2.30pm.

Welcome to newly elected Councillor Steve Count, at his first Council meeting.

The by-election for the County Council Arbury Division which is to be held on 5th May following the resignation of Councillor Rupert Moss-Eccardt.

Best wishes for the future go to Stephen Moir, the Council’s Corporate Director: Strategy and Democracy who joined in 2005 and who leaves the Council at the end of March 2011 and also to Peter Studdert, Director of Joint Planning for the Cambridge Growth Areas and Northstowe who retires at the end of March.

Congratulations to Alex Plant who has been appointed the new Executive Director: Environment Services will start at the County Council on 4th July 2011.

A Start of Works turf-cutting ceremony for the new St Neots Foot & Cycle Bridge, to be named Willow Bridge, took place on Thursday 10th March.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

Congratulations to all the staff involved in the creation of the Joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy following the announcement on 15 March the Planning Inspectorate confirming that it is a “sound” document.

The new Education Centre at the Mechanical Biological Treatment Plant at Waterbeach opened in February. This ground breaking new centre is a key part of the County Council’s efforts to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Building on the success of seven other libraries across the county, the County Council is introducing the popular and successful self-service technology to Ely Library to help visitors issue and return a range of items, from books to DVDs.

The County Council’s share of the road repair monies announced recently by Government is £2.68 million. In addition, a letter had been received from Transport Minister MP Norman Baker confirming a £258,000 cash boost for Cambridgeshire’s plans to improve community transport.

Inspectors during an unannounced inspection by OfSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) have praised the work undertaken by the Council’s Children’s Services to minimise the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

The Chairman joined Contact Centre staff on 18th March when they were a donation centre for Comic Relief. Over 150 volunteers helped raise a grand total of £168,000 taken from telephone donors on the night.

The Cambridge Royal Commonwealth Society Youth Summit held on 17 and 18th March brought together 100 young people between the ages of 14 and 17 from various schools in the Cambridge area to debate pressing global, local and national issues.

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011
PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. Question from Stephen Harangozo to Councillor McGuire, Cabinet Member for Highways and Access

I'm the District Councillor for Comberton and also a bus user. This service the 18 that's threatened is particularly well used on Friday nights with up to 44 passengers meeting a clear social need. I am encouraged by Councillor McGuire's comments that if no other transport option to communities will exist we will be trying to continue to provide the service so my question Chairman is:

The late evening 18 service from Cambridge to Longstowe on Friday and Saturday, now threatened by the proposed bus cuts, is well patronised, including by many young people. Given that a 'community transport scheme' could not be expected to cater for large numbers of users, especially late at night during the weekend, would the Council now be prepared to remove this service from those earmarked to receive no further financial support?"

Reply from Councillor McGuire, Cabinet Member for Highways and Access

Chairman, I would like to thank Councillor Harangozo for his question. Chairman it is not my intention to rehearse all the background leading to the decision to withdraw the funding from subsidised bus services throughout the County, other than to say in order to achieve the necessary savings we have had to make some very difficult and unpopular decisions. If the late 18 service from Cambridge to Longstowe on Friday and Saturday was sufficiently well patronised, I feel confident that the operator would be prepared to take it on as a commercial venture. His reluctance to do so leads me to believe that this is not the case. However, I am aware that officers have approached Stagecoach and they are investigating various options and we will continue to work with them to try and find a solution. I do acknowledge that those who use it are going to be inconvenienced. That said though, there is nothing really any different about the evening 18 compared to any of the other evening services that are being withdrawn and so I cannot see any particular reason to retain this one and not the others, if we are to approach this undesirable but necessary issue equitably across the County where we are withdrawing funding from all evening and Sunday services.

Supplementary Question from Stephen Harangozo to Councillor McGuire, Cabinet Member for Highways and Access

Thank you again, Chairman I believe a solution can be found working with the local representatives of the Parish Council, the operator and myself. I'm spending a lot of time working with your officers as well here, so on that basis, I'd like to ask Councillor McGuire if he would be prepared to attend a meeting of the local representatives as soon as possible, to include myself and the County Councillor to start to work out the best way ahead?

Reply from Councillor McGuire, Cabinet Member for Highways and Access

Chairman, in principle yes, and if Councillor Harangozo wants to advise me of the day, I will obviously discuss that with our officers how we can best approach it. But I would certainly be always happy to work with the Community in any form whatsoever if we can help to resolve some of these issues that arise from the Council's decisions.

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011
MINUTE 138a) – PETITIONS**

Received before the deadline for speaking and contains over 50 signatures so the Petition Organiser, or their nominee will be able to speak at the meeting.

(i) Text of a petition containing 210 signatures presented by Alison M. Dunning

“We, the undersigned, wish Cambridgeshire County Council to re-consider the proposed cuts to bus services. The 16 + 17 are vital to our villages.”

(ii) Text of a petition containing 103 signatures presented by Gabriele Reifenberg

“The Tory-run County Council has announced large cuts in its bus budget. This presents a huge risk to the 199 bus, which runs through Newnham. We the undersigned petition the Conservative-run Cambridgeshire County Council to protect services on the 199 bus route in Cambridge”

AMENDMENTS MADE TO THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
PRACTICE

Attached separately

COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011

WRITTEN QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.4

Question from Councillor S Gymer to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty

I have recently learnt about the withdrawal of the minibus that supports 35 travellers in Cottenham. I was immediately concerned for the impact on the teaching staff and disruption to other pupils not to mention the detrimental effect this would have on the learning for the traveller children. Can Councillor Harty assure me that all has been done to support these students in getting them to school and that the impact assessment is rigorous, as there seems to be little local consultation? The parents were sent a letter before Christmas but I am not sure that all involved have received this and understood the contents. Will these pupils be entitled to a transport appeal?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty

This is a complicated issue.

Three years ago in 2007 the route between Smithy Fen and Cottenham Primary was re-assessed by the County Road Safety Officer and was found to meet the legal definition of an available walking route to school. As a result of this, under the terms of the Council's Home to School/College Transport policy, children using this route were no longer eligible to free transport on the grounds of road safety. However, despite it being safe to walk, the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) team felt that to remove the bus would inevitably result in attendance issues for the children and the Service took the decision to fund the provision of transport. The provision of the bus was therefore not a result of an unsafe route, but rather an intervention designed to raise the attainment of vulnerable/low-achieving groups, this includes Travellers.

The recent proposal to stop the bus between Smithy Fen and Cottenham has come about as a result of core budget cuts of up to £400K to CREDS.

The cost of the bus is £42,000 per annum, which is roughly the equivalent of 1 Full time equivalent (FTE) advisory teacher or 2 FTE support staff. The decision to include the cost of the bus in CREDS' savings has been made reluctantly, but it does mean that the Authority can continue to offer an effective level of service responsive to need across the County. Currently there are 673 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils on roll in 135 schools across the County and, given the circumstances, the provision of this bus for the 44 pupils from Smithy Fen to access school along a route regarded as safe, could no longer be justified. A letter informing parents and carers of all the Smithy Fen children (then 36) about the planned termination of the bus service was sent out in December 2010 and was followed up the following week by CREDS' Home-School Liaison Officer (HSLO) home visits. Since the beginning of the Spring Term 2011, the HSLO has made weekly visits, to Smithy Fen, totalling 12 since the letter was sent, and has also left telephone messages for families who were not at home.

The CREDS support currently provided for Cottenham Primary School includes dedicated HSLO support, half a day a week advisory teacher support and 3-4 days' a week teaching assistant support. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works closely with the school and the Service to support Traveller attendance.

The Headteacher of Cottenham Primary School is aware of the potential impact on Traveller attendance and punctuality as a result of the termination of the bus service and is arranging to meet Traveller parents this week to discuss school's expectations in terms of attendance, punctuality and car parking. CREDS HSLO will assist at this meeting. This should mitigate against any negative impact on the teachers and other pupils in the school and also on the achievement of the Traveller children.

With regard to the route, we have requested a further risk assessment to update our information on the safety of the route since the last assessment in 2007. This will be available by the end of April.

If parents wish to appeal the decision to withdraw transport, a Service Appeals Committee (SAC) comprising 3 county councillors will hear their case and that of the Local Authority before deciding whether or not to grant their appeal. The two grounds on which the SAC can allow an appeal are as follows:

- 1) That the LA has not applied its Home to School Transport Policy correctly or
- 2) That there are compelling grounds to justify making an exception to the terms of the Home to school Transport Policy.

The service will not end before there has been reasonable time for appeals to be made and to be heard.

Question from S Gymer to the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor L McGuire

Stagecoach's recent decision to replace the Citi 4 with the B Cambridge to Orchard Park, coupled with the reduction in the Citi 7 (soon to be renamed as Citi 8) frequency now means that Histon Road, Orchard Park, Cottenham, Histon and Impington will have a 20 minute service. This seems inadequate in comparison to the other routes into Cambridge. Can you please provide population demographic and bus frequency so we can compare the different routes across Cambridge? A simple solution would be to get the B service to stop on Histon Road at least at the shops near Windsor Road, as this is a popular stop. Can the Councillors concerned please plead the case for this extra stop as I am sure they do not want to see the Guided Bus being responsible for local people losing their local services? This is an issue that has an impact on all commuters as less bus provision will result in more congested roads.

I know the reply will be that this is a commercial decision but can you please demonstrate to the public that whilst you have lost control of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB) contractor, you still have some influence over the bus companies when it comes to CGB.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning, Cllr R Pegram and Cabinet Member for for Highways and Access, Councillor L McGuire

Unfortunately I am unable to provide the population demographic by route across Cambridge as we do not have the data.

However, Councillor Gymer has already been given the details we have regarding bus services on various routes. The Citi8 will be the only service stopping on most of Histon

Road, although in addition Whippet 14 will stop on the section from the Gilbert Road junction towards the city every 30 minutes off peak.

The decision to reduce the frequency of the Citi7 (soon to be Citi8) was indeed a commercial one taken by Stagecoach and I understand that their belief is that the current patronage is insufficient to offset the cost of providing the current 10 minute service. Before the service frequency was increased through Kickstart funding, the service operated every 20 minutes with single decker vehicles. This service level has been maintained for nearly two years after the Kickstart funding has ended and although it is disappointing that it is now reverting to every 20 minutes, there is additional capacity as double decker vehicles are now being used. I am pleased that Stagecoach have said that they will monitor the situation once it has been introduced.

Under the terms of Section 38 of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Order 2005 the Council has the power to manage the frequency and timing of services on the guided busway. However this only applies on the guided busway itself and does not apply on the on-road section of the route. All of the services which will use the busway will operate without subsidy. As commercial services, the decisions on the routes taken by the buses and the stops used once the buses leave the Busway are ultimately down to the Bus Operators. This has always been the case and has been made clear throughout the development of the Busway. Bus operators have to weigh up the pros and cons of additional stops against the impacts on journey times and patronage.

We have to recognise that commercial decisions on routes that receive no public funding are matters for the operators. However, we work closely with bus operators in so far as we have common cause and that is to provide the best possible public transport given current circumstances, for example, operators are involved in our joint working on transport with the City and district councils, and I am always keen to explore with the operators how services can be best provided.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011

ORAL QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.1

1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram from Councillor I Bates

I wonder if Councillor Pegram could update us as to where we are with respect of the A14 and the proposals coming forward for studies?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram

I thank Councillor Bates for advance notice of this question. As members may be aware a response was received from the Department for Transport (DfT) in February agreeing to this authority's proposals for a joint approach to identify solutions to the problems that exist on the A14. Since that point we have been working with the Department for Transport to prepare a brief for the work as well as for governance arrangements for that group. This is nearly complete and an early version was circulated to departments for comment. The proposal in outline is for a piece of work that will be completed no later than mid 2012, probably earlier and it will seek to find real deliverable and affordable solutions to the problems we experience on a regular basis on the A14 corridor. The governance structure is developing and the first meeting of what will be a high level steering group should commence Chairman in a month or so. Consultants will be engaged by DfT to do the work and I should add, at their expense. It is clear that we need to focus on the middle section of the A14 i.e. Ellington to Fen Ditton and not the whole A14 route as originally suggested. No options at this stage are ruled in or out and the study will look at rail and other non road as well as road solutions to the problems that exist. Any investment is likely to be after the next comprehensive spending review is announced and we await that with some considerable interest.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram from Councillor I Bates

This is a report which was in the Cambridge Evening News a couple of months ago and I quote, this is from the Member of Parliament for Cambridge. "The scheme from Ellington to Fen Ditton would have created more problems than it solved". This sounds to me to be a rather negative statement which has been made which is contrary I think, to most other MPs in this area and bearing in mind that this is a growth area with initiative to develop and bring jobs and prosperity to this part of the world. I wonder if the member would actually make any further comments?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram

I can't remember the actual item in the Cambridge Evening News. My only challenge would be are the comments attributed to the member, are they fact or fiction in terms of was it evidenced opinion or was it just an opinion?

2. Question to the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, from Councillor S Hoy

I sit on the Adoption Panel as a member representative and I'm very concerned that we need to maintain an excellent service in these times of austerity. So can Councillor Curtis tell me what are we doing in the service in light of the recent move of a key member of staff?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis

Thank you and I'd like to thank Councillor Hoy for advance notice of the question. Members are probably aware of the success of our Adoption Service. The recent The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OfSTED) inspection rating was good with outstanding features and one of the things of note that really makes them stand out, last year there was a reduction nationally of 15% in the number of children adopted. In Cambridgeshire we actually increased the number of children adopted by 4% and that shows the focus and the care of our workers. I would also like to pay tribute to both Councillor Hoy and Councillor Kenney who sit on the Adoption Panel. It's an onerous task not just because of the decisions that they are making, but actually the workload is quite significant as well. It is also true that the Head of Service, Jackie Coventry, has recently left and I think I have to pay tribute to Jackie, she was a phenomenal member of staff and she will be missed.

What we are trying to do is look at some really strategic options in terms of the leadership and that is about commissioning some work. Not to actually outsource the Adoption Service, but to look at outsourcing perhaps the strategic and management function of the service to see if there is a different way of doing it, looking at some of the leading providers of Adoption Services around the county. It is quite innovative and a little bit ahead of the game and actually interestingly like a number of things we are doing, we are doing things that are being seen to be ahead of the game and then the Government are doing work to actually encourage Councils to work in this sort of direction and actually encouraging using the same providers. So the idea and the need to actually drive adoption standards even higher is there, we recognise that and what we are trying to do is be a little bit innovative and a little bit forward thinking and thinking a little bit differently to make sure that our Adoption Service continues to work for the children and families of Cambridgeshire.

3. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from Councillor J Dutton

The severe winter has caused much more damage to our road network than we would normally expect. Our highways department has worked extremely hard to fill the potholes and effected services, there is much more to do. Can you let

the Council know what we intend to do to put our roads back into an early serviceable standard?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire

Chairman I am grateful for the question, I think it is generally recognised that the last two winters have been extremely severe ones and have had a quite seriously detrimental effect on our roads. We have been working very hard, our highways people have been working very hard to deal with these and colleagues will know that from previous discussions in this Chamber, we have ourselves had discussions with the District Councils in particular, and the City Council which of course is a District Council, as to how together with their help we can improve the way we deal with winter maintenance. In terms of the actual number of potholes, again we are very fortunate in that the Secretary of State has announced additional funding for authorities up and down the country. In February we were advised that there is an additional £100m being provided nationally, it's fairly typical to say that we would get roughly 1% of whatever money is available. In the budget announcement of course the Chancellor announced that in fact they were increasing this funding nationally to £200m and I understand we are receiving approximately £2.682m additional funding for this, and that is specifically targeted at potholes. We will in fact have to publish on our website by the end of September how we will have spent this money. So by definition, I guess that means that we have got to now start looking at our whole resources, not just the money, but our people, to ensure that our money actually gets spent in that way. So in that context I will be having discussions with the Director for Highways and Access, so anything is additional money. I'm grateful for the question in terms of the fact that it is specifically aimed at *(the member was informed at this point that he was out of time)*

Supplementary Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from Councillor J Dutton

Can Members have your assurance of early replies to e-mails reporting problem areas and that members can expect the full support of our highways officers?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire

I'm not quite sure of the link, what I would say to any member of the Council is that there is an extremely good way of reporting potholes and that is our reporting system which is on the website. I would suggest that any member actually uses that rather than contacting officers directly to say there is a pothole in a particular area because that does itself generate an awful lot of work. I have mystery shopper tested it myself and it does work, and it works very effectively, and we've already heard compliments from other people about it, so I would certainly recommend it. Apart from that there is the alternative one, the national one like 'Fix My Street' but having saying that there is a cost to us as a local authority if we use that. I would recommend that any member wanting to report a pothole uses that system, it will make the whole system much more efficient and it will negate the need for individual officers to report, because you do actually get a report back via your email address as to what's happening. I can see a member opposite shaking her head, I don't understand

quite what that means. I have used it, others have used it and I can see other members nodding their head agreeing with me.

4. Question to the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, from Councillor D Jenkins

My question is about the Skills Unit in March which is a unique unit within the County it provides an excellent service, vision and vocational training in a secure environment as part of our Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) provision. It's also been described by the Service Director as an incredible resource. Can you please explain to me when we have such a unique and incredible facility why it should be threatened with closure and could I ask him, in his answer, to avoid using the word cuts?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis

I'll make it plain, It's absolutely not about cuts, Madam Chairman. It is about the fact that with the reduction in the number of children we have accessing the EOTAS service, and it's that that makes the difference, and it makes the cost of this centre in its current guise unaffordable. It's quite plain, it's quite simple. It is about the success we have had in delegating authority to head teachers and the funding down to head teachers to give them the responsibility to manage EOTAS provision better, and to manage the issues that lead to children becoming educated out of school, that has led to this. It is an expensive resource given the reduction in numbers, the current structure, and the current way it works, is unaffordable. There are no decisions taken about its future at the moment, we are working and consulting with outside bodies and other organisations to see if we can find a way of moving this organisation forward and keeping it open. No promises either way, this is tough and it's tough because of the success we've had, but we are working on it because we do realise that it does add value.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, from Councillor D Jenkins

Thank you for a very good and constructive answer Councillor Curtis. I understand as part of the present proposal it is proposed to move the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to the March Tuition Centre, which appears to be a totally unsuitable building to handle such activity, and given the fact that the skills unit will cost a lot of money to mothball it, isn't there some more embracing scheme that could be considered?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis

The embracing scheme in terms of the PRU is actually Building Schools for the Future (BSF) which has £2m of funding to move the whole PRU into a new building. I don't think that it is feasible to move the PRU over to the March Skills Centre, I don't think the capacity is there within the March Skills Centre to allow that to happen, and it's quite clear that the Tuition Centre and the PRU as they are at the moment, neither building is fit for purpose, and that's why part of our BSF programme, and the funding has been endorsed for this from Government, it is to build a new specialist PRU provision in Fenland. So that is the answer to that problem.

5. Question to the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, from Councillor L Nethsingha

The Council's provision for children educated other than at school (EOTAS) is just beginning its sixth reorganisation in 2 years. The children educated in the surveys are some of the most vulnerable in the County and the rapid changes taking place as part of the Council's reorganisation are causing major concerns for them and their parents as well as for the staff in this area. While I understand and support the reasoning behind the devolving of the budget for EOTAS for schools and I support what you just said about the reduction in numbers which is excellent. I am concerned about the detail of how the charging system for schools to buy back provision of services from the Council has been set. Could the Cabinet Member provide the figures for the cost of a school buying back a place at each of the units providing EOTAS provision and could he also give for comparison the amount each budget holder was given for the places in 2009/10 and 2010/11, and because this is technical I did give notice of this, so I hope he has the figures.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis

Some of the numbers and the historic figures are quite difficult to work out because of the way it was, but basically the allocation at the moment is about £15,000 per head. The previous numbers that we have got, based on the beginning of 2009/10 were an average cost of about £19,000 per head for normal provision but for medical needs provision it was about £11,500, so the £15,000 we are allocating now was about the same, roughly. You are absolutely right about the number of reviews, we should be concerned, and it is about the fact that this has been a service that has undergone significant change for all sorts of reasons. Let's not pretend each Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and EOTAS provision has been through 6 consultations, that's not true, the 4th and 5th ones were area based in different areas and were actually abandoned in favour of the 6th, so let's not pretend it has been 6 for each one. I think that it is also worth making a point here, the Lib Dems previously were criticising us, and we were agreeing, when we weren't having enough of our children in the EOTAS provision achieving 15 hours of provision and the changes we are making will make sure that every child that's in EOTAS provision gets 25 hours of qualified teaching time. So there is a significant improvement in quality as well, which goes along with this.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis, from Councillor L Nethsingha

Thank you very much for those figures, this was intended to be a question to get information rather than to be critical, so thank you for the information. The point I want to make is about the Medical Needs Unit and it is interesting that those figures are significant that the charge that you have were significantly lower than the charge that you are now making and I think that my understanding is that for some of those children in fact the costs would be even lower, because of their medical needs they don't have the capacity for the number of hours that you are providing, and I'm wondering whether the Cabinet member would consider looking again at that cost, and looking at whether for that particular unit it might be possible to have a more varied schedule of

costs, so that schools are encouraged to use it, because it does have particular skills in terms of providing for children with quite severe needs in some cases. Sometimes the costs are not high and it would encourage schools to use the unit more if the costs were lower. So I wonder if you might look at that again?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor M Curtis

We will take a look at that, I think that it is interesting because of what I know with discussing about special schools and there is a similarity of what you are saying and where we might be headed with special schools. We will take a look at it. One of the things that we are doing with the latest consultation is we are looking at an overarching framework for EOTAS provision, a quality assurance framework, and obviously that will feed into that as well and there will be a role there to make sure we are providing the right quality of provision for our children. I don't want to say yes we will reduce costs because the important part of it is we must maintain quality, whilst we are doing what we are doing, and that has to be the overarching issue but we will look at the issue you have suggested.

6. Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from Councillor R West

I support your efforts to maintain our library service in difficult financial times. Will you support Buckden Parish Council and local people in continuing to provide a quality library service in Buckden?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

Thank you Madam Chairman and thank you Councillor for that question. We are now embarking on the second consultation of our libraries which started last night in Cambridge City and we look forward very much to coming to Buckden, I think on the 8th April when we will be discussing plans with local people. It is our aim to keep as many libraries open as possible, we are not in the business of closure, but we are in the business of providing the best possible library service that we can and that will be developed and carried out in conjunction with local people.

7. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck from Councillor P Reeve

Could I have your assurance that in areas such as Ramsey, where we are very lucky that we are having our new library re-opened, that this Council will do everything within its power to ensure that old buildings, where the Council's moving from, such as the current library in Ramsey, will use joined up thinking to ensure that these buildings are not left empty, especially when there is significantly local community support for schemes that want to use future empty buildings?

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck

That's a nice question because absolutely, as you know we have a real good programme of using our existing buildings, and with our partners as well, to see if we can work together.

8. Question to the Cabinet Member for Resources & Performance, Councillor J Reynolds from Councillor S Tierney

A number of people have contacted me to express their approval of the welcome Council Tax freeze which has meant that the hard pressed taxpayers of the County have not had an additional burden placed upon them this year as they may have had if we had taken some people's advice and made a painful increase. What is the funding that this Council will be receiving next year to support local services?

Reply the Cabinet Member for Resources & Performance, Councillor J Reynolds

This Council will be receiving, I believe, and I haven't got the exact figures, but I think it is just shy of some £6m as a result of the Council Tax freeze and the 2¹/₂% that the coalition has made available to Cambridgeshire for next year. Cambridgeshire will still remain the 4th lowest County Council preceptor in the country and I think that's a tribute to the work that has been done in the past to keep our Council Tax down where we possibly can.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Resources & Performance, Councillor J Reynolds from Councillor S Tierney

We know that the Liberal Democrats have proposed a Council Tax increase over the next few years amounting to between £50 - £80m. There has been a tentative hope expressed to me that the Council Tax freeze agreed by the Conservatives might be able to continue for future years and I wonder if you would like to comment on your aspirations in that regard.

Reply the Cabinet Member for Resources & Performance, Councillor J Reynolds

We need to think carefully about a couple of issues before we come to a conclusion. The first thing is that Government is undertaking a review of funding for local authorities, this is going to be as quick as it can in producing that new structure, and we all know how Cambridgeshire is underfunded compared to the average, and indeed in Education alone if we received the average, Cambridgeshire would get another £35m for Education. So anything that helps us get closer to the average, the better it will be for those people who we represent here in the county. Of course the review may have identified what Government's intention is, as to whether it is going to seek further Council Tax freezes or not, and I think we will have to wait until that time before we make any decision. I hope that any of these changes and decisions will come as quickly as possible, so that we can properly and effectively manage the finances of this Council.

9. Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from Councillor V McGuire

The future of Sawtry Library is listed for further consultation in the forthcoming review . Does Sir Peter agree that continued erosion of rural services is a major concern, and how does he think we can link the Localism agenda with the future of our libraries?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

Thank you Madam Chairman, I don't quite know where to start with this one. If I just say that we are in the process of the second round of consultation, and of course we are concerned about rural services and their decline. What we want to do in this consultation is again consult with local people about how they want to run their local library service and in the context of Sawtry, that will be very important to listen to local people. I think that Sawtry is not like any other village - it has hamlets around it which will rely on that local library. At the end of the day when we get to our consultation, which I believe is on the 4th April, we will be looking to local people to help us decide how they want their library services run.

10. Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, from Councillor C Hutton

Firstly, I'm proud to actually declare a personal interest in this question as a Governor of the Longsands Learning Partnership and in that capacity I was delighted by the result of the recent OfSTED inspection of St Neots Community College, resulting not only in it not being moved out of special measures, but receiving a rating of 'Outstanding' in three separate areas. Would Councillor Harty join me in congratulating both the College and its team working in it, and the whole Federation, noting that a move to a Federation was a move that the Liberal Democrats vociferously opposed.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty

Thank you Councillor Hutton for giving me notice of this question. I do think that the OfSTED report is very good for the Community College. It's a reward for a great deal of good work that has been contributed by many people during the last 9 months, and I do congratulate the Community College and the Federation for the success. I'd also congratulate the Director of the Community College, the staff and students and Governors that have taken part, and have been part of this achievement. I was at the College yesterday with the Director, Scott Preston, and it's clear that you can see and hear the improvements that have taken place, and the clear strengths and advantages following the formation of the Federation. It's working extremely well, and I look forward to future continued improvement of the situation.

Point of Information from Councillor P Downes

We did not oppose the Federation, we opposed the process by which the Federation was arrived at. There is an important distinction to be made, and I would be grateful if you would not perpetuate this myth that we opposed the Federation. We welcome the improvement of any school and are delighted that this has happened and we congratulate all those involved, but let's get the facts right, what we called in was the process, not the decision.

11. Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from Councillor M Smith

The implementation of the Localism agenda will be achieved by working closely with our partners. Please, can Sir Peter give a progress report on our partnership working, both with local authorities, and with local communities?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

Thank you Madam Chairman, I couldn't agree more that the localism agenda and the benefits can only be achieved with partnership working. It was a slow start but I'm pleased to say that with Mike Davey we have now got off to a very swift beginning. What we are doing is, we are consulting with our partners, and we have started by meeting with Huntingdonshire District Council, a very successful meeting, where we have agreed that that authority will work on its own where it needs to, but we will get together where joint partnership working is important and can be done. So I look forward to working with Huntingdonshire on that. We are in touch with local organisations, our voluntary organisations in the county to see what help that we can give them, and guidance on the Localism agenda and the Big Society. At the end of the day a lot of this work is going to be down to us, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are going to be the deliverers of localism and the Big Society, and it will be down to us to make sure that happens in the county.

12. Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, from Councillor F Whelan

In January we welcomed the fact that Cabinet passed the proposals to build a secondary school in Cambourne. But I'm still fielding lots of phone calls, letters and e-mails from local constituents who are very worried about availability of places at Comberton Village College and obviously that is dependent on the new school being built in Cambourne. Can Councillor Harty give me a date for when work is going to start, and when we are expecting the school to be completed?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty

Thank you Madam Chairman, I'm sure you'll be aware that I can't give you a date at this point in time, there are various issues being resolved and no doubt in time we will be able to give you that date.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty, from Councillor F Whelan

I appreciate that you can't give me fixed dates but if we could have some sort of guidance, that would be very helpful. At the moment Comberton Village College will be completely full in September 2013 but at the moment the problem is that only children who are progressing from Year 6 in primary school, who are going into Comberton, are assured of a place. Anybody from any other class, who is moving into any of the local catchment villages, currently they have a very strong chance of having to go to appeal to get a place. I don't want a fixed date, but some sort of guidance would be really helpful.

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty

What I'll do is give you a written response to that, to give you more measured details.

13. Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck from Councillor I Manning

Now at the end of the day, I'll tell no lies we are all busy people, but I was rather upset you might say to hear from Councillor Sian Reid, the Leader of Cambridge City Council, that she had written two letters to you this year, one on the 14th January and one on the 9th March, on libraries and the City Centre shuttle bus, and received no response whatsoever. So I wondered if you could comment on that please?

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck

I have never, not responded. That came up once before, there was a Member sitting here, I will not embarrass them who actually said something very similar, and I said I had no recollection of it, by the time I was out there at lunch I was told, no, sorry, it didn't go to you it went to the Chief Executive. So I am amazed, because I meet with Sian, so the fact that she has never even brought it up to me, I'm really astounded, and I can tell you that I have not got any emails that I have not responded to. So we can look into that.

Supplementary Question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck from Councillor I Manning

On that basis will you respond to those two letters, I'll give you copies of them.

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor J Tuck

I would like the original emails please.

14. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from Councillor S Gymer

It's regarding the adoption of roads in new estates and I'm sure you're not completely unaware of this but I have a number of places in my area that remain unadopted, some of them for nearly 10 years. I have been speaking to the officers concerned but again there doesn't seem to be much progress being made, and I don't think this is one of those Section 38s or anything like that. I think it's just the developers aren't doing the initial work that they should be doing, and my question really is what is the County doing to put this right? Because until they are adopted we can't have grit bins, I am told, even though they pay Council Tax they are not allowed to have grit bins, we can't do yellow lines in those areas, we can't fix street lights, and all the rest of it, and people are starting to get very unhappy. I know it's the developer's responsibility up to now, but you know as well as I do, they are hard to track down when they've sold all the houses and moved on for quite some years.

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire

Chairman, I'm sure there are members around the Chamber on all sides who have sympathy with the position that residents on estates or wherever who have unadopted roads and the problems they are facing. I'm slightly surprised

about the grit bin ones but I'm happy to look into that separately. Streetlights, yes they are part of it because they haven't been adopted. Section 38 agreements with developers are there for a purpose. It is wrong for anybody to expect the Council Tax payer from anywhere in the county - and this is a national problem - to pick up the tab for work not done by developers, and in fact in much of the time in early years when an estate is being built and developed, the power actually lies in people who are purchasing those houses, to put pressure on the developers. We know it's difficult, I've got a very large one in my own patch which suffers the same problems and it took a long time to get them adopted. What we are doing, and we are trying to enforce this nationally of course is to improve the bond arrangement, whereby if the developers fail to get in and do it, that - whether it's us or the planning authorities - can exercise those bonds. Section 38 at the moment the right way for us to go about it but I can have sympathy and the problem is the developers' problem up until now, it continues to be the developers problem, but if Councillor Gymer you give me specifics and you can identify that it is in fact somehow the County who has been dilatory in this, then I will take up the cudgel on your behalf. I think you have to recognise the difficult position that we, as both the Highway Authority, generally has in adopting something which has not been done properly. It is a national issue and I know there are attempts to have it addressed properly nationally, to make these developers responsible for completing and doing what they should have done in the first place. I will pick up the grit bin issue, because I'm not familiar with that, and if you let me know where it is I am happy to discuss this with the officers and find out why we are saying to any particular Parish Council you cannot position a grit bin, because it is largely up to the Parish Council where they position grit bins, we will fill them if we've got the salt.

Supplementary Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from Councillor S Gymer

The grit bin issue came up at Orchard Park and I had a response from an officer about that. Particularly it's not probably specifics, although I can give you specifics, but it's because things are let to slip for so long. If the County has any problem it is that they allow the developers to move away before these problems are sorted, and it goes out of the developer's minds. I know they have their bonds, but at the end of the day it's what we can do best for the people in those estates, and I'm not criticising the officers, I know they go out, they mark them up, they tell the developer, the developer ignores them and they go back 3 years later and it's still not resolved.

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire

Chairman, I don't intend to go over the whole of that again because Councillor Gymer knows the difficulty. I don't think it's fair to say the County lets a developer slip away, we don't, but we've got very limited control over what a developer does. We are not a policeman at the end of the day we don't have that degree of control.

15. Question to the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor D Brown

Suffolk County Council has announced that it is to close a number of Household Waste Recycling sites, as at 9th May. This includes one at Depot Road, Newmarket which is used by many residents of South and East Cambridgeshire, as well as those in Suffolk. The facility provided in Newmarket is highly valued, and many local residents cannot understand why Suffolk are closing it. However, the local press is quoting Suffolk County Council as saying that the majority of the waste taken to Newmarket is from Cambridgeshire residents, and that Cambridgeshire County Council has refused to contribute to the costs of keeping that site open. Will Councillor Orgee please advise Council what discussions have taken place between this Council and Suffolk County Council about the proposed closure of Newmarket?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment, Councillor T Orgee

Thank you very much for that question. I met my counterpart from Suffolk at a meeting in August in Newmarket, and at that time she expressed an interest in the recycling going on in Cambridgeshire. So I invited her to a meeting at the Donarbon Plant in Waterbeach, to showcase what was going on there. I believe this was on the 22nd September. We also discussed issues of mutual interest, and one of the issues that came up was about facilities in one council area and very close to County boundary, and possibly used by people in the neighbouring authority. It was a general discussion, and the Newmarket site was mentioned in broad terms. There was no suggestion at that time that the Newmarket site was going to be closed by Suffolk, and therefore there was no request about us supporting it, because they didn't talk about closing it at that time. So any statement in the press about us knowing about the closure of that site is entirely wrong, we didn't know about it until it was announced in the press, and secondly there was no specific request for funding for that site and therefore there was no denial of that request, because such a request was never made. Having said that, we were expecting as a result of these discussions some further information to come forward from Suffolk, and as I say, nothing further happened, no further contact was made between that meeting in September and the announcement of closure. Having said that, we have a genuine issue here, and I'm trying to set up a meeting with Suffolk as quickly as possible and also to include some colleagues in East Cambridgeshire to see what potential ways there are of moving forward and tackling this situation.

16. Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram from Councillor J Palmer

What is the current position of this Council regarding the possible reopening of Soham Railway Station, and what is the County Council doing to progress the situation?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning, Councillor R Pegram

I'll answer both questions Chairman. We are supporting the initiative that comes through as part of the Soham Master Plan. The rail companies have to come on board with this Chairman, we are not prepared to fund it, we don't have the funding available to us. There could be Section 106 receipts coming forward once the Master Plan is implemented. Until that happens there is no available funding and therefore whilst we will encourage it, and encourage it

with outside bodies, including all of the rail services involved, we cannot dictate the pace of engagement, or indeed whether or not the scheme will be implemented. We are, however, working, liaising and trying to persuade the rail companies to give it more than fair consideration at this moment in time.

17. Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from Councillor S Sedgewick-Jell

Can Councillor Brown assure us that any possible appointments to a charitable trust for the libraries, particularly the Chair and Trustees, will on the basis of an open advertisement, open competition and open selection?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

Thank you Madam Chairman, I can confirm that the advertisements both for the Chairman of the Trust and for Trustees will be placed shortly on an open basis.

Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from Councillor S Sedgewick-Jell

How is the appointing procedure going to take place after that?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

An interviewing Committee is to be made up but I'm not precisely aware of the membership at the moment.

18. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from K Bourke

This is a Megarider ticket, it's a bus ticket which is a weekly pass around Cambridge and its immediate surrounding area and it costs £11.50. Does the Cabinet Member consider this good value for money?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire

Well it is very subjective, thank you for that. Do you know, I don't have a clue, because I don't use the Megarider, but I guess if the commercial operators have introduced it, and it sells, then I guess by definition somebody thinks it's value for money. Other than that Chairman, I am not familiar with it, so I do apologise.

Supplementary Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access, Councillor M McGuire from K Bourke

I have asked the Council's financial department to calculate what it would cost to maintain all of the Council's subsidised buses, if we kept the Council Tax freeze this year, which was something out alternative budget committed to. I've been informed that it would cost the average taxpayer the grand total of £11.87 over the course of the next four years to do so, including a one year freeze. Considering it costs £11.50 for a Megarider to travel around Cambridge for one week, does the Cabinet member not think that paying £11.87 over four years, that's a 37p mark-up, to save all of the subsidised bus services in the county, is good value at the price?

Reply from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Access,
Councillor M McGuire

Strange question Chairman, because it calls for an opinion on my part. Now what Councillor Bourke did say, and again I appreciate that I might be showing my ignorance here, but it said that it allows people to travel around Cambridge. The bus subsidy applies to the whole of the county, so I don't know if that Megarider is actually good value for the residents in the north west of the County, so I would find it very difficult to answer the question. I hope colleagues will appreciate that, what happens down in Cambridge, which is well served by the commercial bus operators, as opposed to other parts of the county, and I look to places like Ramsey or to west Hunts, is slightly different. I don't know if that Megarider is available. I apologise Chairman but I don't use the Megarider.

19. Question to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown, from
Councillor L Kadic

Can you tell me how many applications you've received for Royal Wedding street parties to take place?

Reply from the Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Sir P Brown

Thank you Madam Chairman, I can confirm that we have received 34 applications across the County and I'm told today that we are the second highest authority in the Country, only second behind Kent. So that is really, really good news, and the other good news is that there will be no charge for the street parties. We are not charging the £850 licence fee that would normally take place. I hope everyone will enjoy the day and hope you will enjoy the day.

QUESTIONS ON POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITY ISSUES

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011

QUESTIONS ON POLICE AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Question from Councillor S Kindersley

Thank you Chairman, I wanted to turn to the paragraph headed collaboration and I wanted to welcome very much the sensible approach being taken by the Police Authority in relation to discussions with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire constabularies, because apart from anything else, obviously you see there it will deliver savings. However, I was slightly concerned to note a following line which starts with local policing is outside of this. Now I understand the reasons for that, but some of us represent divisions which are very, very intrinsically linked to crime and disorder that takes place in other counties.

Chairman, you yourself will know the largest settlement that I represent, Gamlingay, sticks right into Bedfordshire much as they dislike that and therefore there is a great deal of how can I say this, cross border activity and it has always been a long standing concern that Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Constabularies have never quite got their act together on serving the residents of that community in a coherent manner. So I embrace the savings but I do think we are missing perhaps an opportunity to at least talk on an operational level and I hope that Councillor Johnstone in her capacity as spokesperson for the authority today could perhaps take that back to those who are in a position to make a difference to that.

2. Question from Councillor T Sadiq to Councillor

I had the experience of actually going out with our local neighbourhood police very recently, during what they call a beat sweep in Coleridge ward, where a warrant / drugs raid was executed and I was able to observe that and the police officers carrying out their duties and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) as well who assisted them. My concern really stems from the first paragraph of this report which talks about the changes in the funding cuts that are taking place and the loss of police staff posts, 126 partly or about to be lost. You may be aware that the Labour Party today published a report on the use of the Police Pensions Act 1987 to make officers who have had 30 years experience or more, retire early. I do want to know what plans the Cambridgeshire Police Authority has to do the same and how many officers of that level service duration will be retiring and what that means in terms of reduction in police officer numbers?

I also have a concern about the funding for PCSOs who form a very valuable service in terms of neighbourhood policing as I've already mentioned. The funding for PCSOs is not guaranteed after 2012, I think the Neighbourhood Policing Fund gets rolled up into the main police grant when the elected Police Commissioners come in. There is no clarity about what will happen to PCSOs funding and indeed because I believe PCSOs can be made redundant as opposed to serving police officers, there is a real danger that route will be taken in order to achieve the £17-20m savings that are being posited for

Cambridgeshire. This is a real concern for neighbourhood policing, many people in my ward will often comment about seeing our local PCSO riding his bike and having a presence there and helping people out and they also testify to the effectiveness of their presence on the street because their observations have led to arrests and other criminal activities being stopped or detected. I am very, very concerned that neighbourhood policing and loss of PCSOs will have a real impact on our communities. So if any clarity can be given in terms of the numbers of retiring police officers and also in terms of the position that the Cambridgeshire Police Authority is taking on PCSOs funding after 2012 would be greatly appreciated.

3. Question from Councillor P Read

[AUDIO NOT CAPTURED AS MICROPHONE NOT ACTIVATED]

The question related to the merits of having an elected police committee.

Reply from Councillor Johnstone (on behalf of the Police Authority)

Thank you very much Madam Chairman, can I welcome the comments made by Councillor Kindersley with regard to the collaboration project and perhaps I can give him some reassurance on the points that he has made with regards to local policing. I think the important differentiation is between local policing and first response to an incident and the Chief Constable is very clear that neighbourhood policing is about knowing your local area but if it is the case that there is a police officer in Potton who is closer than a police officer in Cambridgeshire then it should be the police officer in Potton that comes across to Gamlingay rather than the police officer that is in Huntingdon or St Neots. This clearly will take some time to bed in, but that's certainly the direction of travel that the Chief Constable wants to take. So I hope that will provide some reassurance in the future.

Picking up Councillor Sadiq's point with the regard to the loss of police staff posts. Yes there are some 126 staff posts going and indeed have gone in this year. The issue around police officer posts and the 30 years, I know that many forces are considering and indeed already implementing use of what's called regulation A19 which allows the compulsory retirement of officers reaching 30 years service on the grounds of efficiency but I would like to give the reassurance that at this stage Cambridgeshire Constabulary are not intending to invoke that regulation. Although we would wish to prepare for its implementation should it become necessary and of course Councillor Sadiq will be aware of the Windsor reports and the recommendations coming out of that and therefore any possible changes to police pay and conditions. A report will be presented to the full authority meeting in April, in fact next week for discussion and approval and those papers are of course public.

Finally with regard to Councillor Read's point about Police and Crime Commissioners, I know that there is a lot of concern about that. The role of the Police Authority will be very much to ensure that whatever the views of individual members on Police and Crime Commissioners that we will prepare the Authority and indeed the Constabulary for a smooth and seamless handover to the new Police and Crime Commissioner, so that we can present that new Commissioner with a very efficient and effective service in Cambridgeshire.

QUESTIONS ON FIRE AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Question to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Pegram, from Councillor P Downes

In the previous item we talked about collaboration with neighbouring authorities, could I express a concern about the future of the Kimbolton Fire Station, which is in my division. Talking to the firemen there, they tell me that lot of their work is in fact over the border with Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire and they are in a very rural area and I do hope that the particular position of Kimbolton and its service will be taken into consideration when this service redesign is taking place.

2. Question to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Pegram, from Councillor N Bell

You spoke about the cuts as a given, although Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services has been rated by the Audit Commission as the cheapest per head in the Country and we've suffered a 9.5% cut which is the maximum that we could be cut. At the last Fire Authority you were asked if you could go to the Prime Minister and ask that our grant settlement be increased. I was hoping today that you might give us some update on some progress with that. The other issue I have is that I'm glad to hear that you have grounded the decision by Suffolk County Council as to whether they will underwrite the cost of redundancies potentially a show stopper or a deal breaker, you might call it. This was raised by the Liberal Democrat Group on the Fire Authority at the time of the emergency meeting on the 6th January, which took this decision that we would negotiate as a fire authority to take over Suffolk's control centre. So when we heard that the department for Communities and Local Government had said that they would not fund these redundancies, it has obviously reinforced our concerns that once the staff transferred over under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) *Regulations* (TUPE) arrangements that we could then be left with a liability for redundancy costs. That was undue and Suffolk needed to underwrite that, so I'm glad he has given us that reassurance today.

3. Question to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Pegram, from Councillor J Dutton

Madam Chairman, over the last couple of months we have heard through the Press that Huntingdonshire Fire Service will be going on to a retained basis at the end of the day shift. This concerns me somewhat. Working with a couple of retained firemen I see the way that they rush from their job, get their hands washed, overalls off and so on and get off to the fire station before they can get to a fire. I'm worrying about the loss of life on this, knowing in particular that many fire officers and police officers also have second jobs i.e. kitchen fitting and things like that, whether they are going to be close enough to be able to get to a fire, quick enough to save lives. That is my main concern, thank you.

4. Question to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Pegram, from Councillor P Reeve

My question is to ask if he would be willing to go back and thank the Fire Authority and the Fire Service on my behalf. In Ramsey we've got one of the

best joint networking processes possible, in that when we have teams of volunteers using speed watch, who go out with myself and other Councillors. They are also now incorporating fire safety officers, who when the police pull over cars just to warn them as a result of volunteers from the community, the Fire Safety Officer is I'm told the number one person who actually makes drivers sit back and think about the way they are driving. This joined up role of the Fire Service is one that is often overlooked and I would be grateful if you would go back and give my thanks for this phenomenal approach to working alongside the police, local councillors and local volunteers from the Fire Service of Cambridgeshire and this is something that I think we really should be trying to promote further afield in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere.

Reply from the Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Pegram

Thank you Chairman, I'll take them in the order they were asked. In terms of Kimbolton, we have cross border activities with many other districts and areas, Newmarket and Royston to name but two. Yes they are complimentary activities and we will continue to retain them when and wherever possible. I'm not going to underwrite anything, everything is in the melting pot as far as this review is concerned. I will not pre-empt that, it's not my decision, the decision will be made based on evidence by the membership of the Fire Authority, but yes it will reserve due consideration.

In terms of the cuts, yes I have written to Bob Neill MP, the Minister for Fire. I'm still waiting I have to say for a response from him as to the exact diary date, I've had acknowledgement but that is all. I'm waiting for a date and I will go down to London and we will discuss and I will put our case forward. I've also asked that his newly appointed Director for Fire who is Neil O'Connor, (he is in charge of resiliencies, fire and emergencies at CLG. It's a new post and I have met him) comes to Cambridgeshire and sees what we do and how we do it. That will be part of the negotiation before the forthcoming funding review and before the consultation period for that ends.

Hunts Fire Station - all proposals are in the pot for due consideration there is going to be no additional risk to life and limb as a result of activities, that's our job to make sure there aren't, and the proposals for Huntingdon are quite simply different. It's a culture change, it doesn't mean to say it's going to be any worse, sometimes you can do more with less. That's an example we will examine with some considerable detail.

In terms of Ramsey and the speed watch, I will thank them, it is I have to say part of our community safety activities, we welcome, it we know it gets results we know it is the way forward and we will continue with it as an initiative.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011
RECORDED VOTE – MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR S WHITEBREAD

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent/No Vote	COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent/No Vote
AUSTEN S	LibD	X				LUCAS V H	Con				X
BATCHELOR J D	LibD	X				MANNING I	LibD	X			
BATES I C	Con		X			MCGUIRE L W	Con		X		
BELL N	LibD	X				McGUIRE V	Con		X		
BOURKE K	LibD				X	MELTON A	Con		X		
BROOKS-GORDON B	LibD	X				NETHSINGHA L	LibD	X			
BROWN D	Con		X			OLIVER L J	Con				X
BROWN F	Con		X			ORGE E A G	Con		X		
BROWN P	Con		X			PALMER J	Con		X		
BUTCHER R	Con				X	PEGRAM D R	Con		X		
CARTER C M	Lab				X	PELLEW A	LibD	X			
CHURCHILL K	Con				X	POWLEY J A	Con				X
CLARK J	Con		X			READ P	Con		X		
CLARKE N	Con		X			REEVE P	UKIP		X		
COUNT S	Con		X			REYNOLDS J E	Con		X		
CRISWELL S J	Con		X			REYNOLDS K A	Con				X
CURTIS M	Con		X			SADIQ T	Lab	X			
DOWNES P J	LibD	X				SEDGWICK-JELL S	Grn	X			
DUTTON J J	Con				X	SHEPHERD C	LibD				X
FARRER R	Con				X	SHUTER M G	Con		X		
GUYATT N	Con		X			SMITH M	Con		X		
GYMER S	LibD	X				STONE T J	LibD	X			
HARPER G F	Con		X			TIERNEY S	Con		X		
HARRISON N	Ind				X	TUCK J M	Con		X		
HARTY D	Con		X			VAN DE VEN S	LibD	X			
HEATHCOCK G J	LibD				X	WEST R	Con		X		
HOY S	Con		X			WHELAN F	LibD	X			
HUNT W T I	Con		X			WHITEBREAD S	LibD	X			
HUTTON C	Con		X			WILKINS K	LibD	X			
JENKINS D	LibD				X	WILLIAMSON M	LibD	X			
JOHNSTONE S F	Con				X	WILSON G	LibD	X			
KADIĆ L	Con		X			WILSON L J	Ind		X		
KENNEY G	Con		X			YEULETT F H	Con		X		
KINDERSLEY S G M	LibD	X									
KING S J E	Con		X			TOTAL		19	34	2	

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 29 MARCH 2011
MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council agreed:

- (i) to replace Councillor G Harper with Councillor S Count on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and for Councillor G Harper to now be a substitute member on the same
- (ii) to replace Councillor R Moss-Eccardt with Councillor A Pellew on the Development Control Committee.