

## COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

**Date:** Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012  
**Time:** 10.30 – 14.02  
**Place:** Shire Hall, Cambridge  
**Present:** Councillor J Powley (Chairman)

Councillors: J Batchelor, I Bates, N Bell, K Bourke, B Brooks-Gordon, F Brown, P Brown, R Butcher, C Carter, K Churchill, J Clark, N Clarke, S Count, M Curtis, P Downes, J Dutton, R Farrer, N Guyatt, S Gymer, G Harper, N Harrison, D Harty, S Hoy, C Hutton, D Jenkins, S Johnstone, E Kadiç, G Kenney, S Kindersley, S King, V Lucas, I Manning, M McGuire, V McGuire, A Melton, L Nethsingha, L Oliver, T Orgee, J Palmer, A Pellew, P Read, P Reeve, J Reynolds, K Reynolds, T Sadiq, P Sales, S Sedgwick-Jell, C Shepherd, M Shuter, M Smith, T Stone, S Tierney, R West, S Whitebread, K Wilkins, M Williamson, G Wilson and F Yeulett.

**Apologies:** Councillors: D Brown, S Criswell, G Heathcock, W Hunt, R Pegram, J Tuck, S van de Ven, F Whelan and L Wilson

### 246. MINUTES – 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2012

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 247. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

### 248. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor	Minute	Details
Batchelor J	251	Member of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
Brown F	255	Member of the Fire Authority
Count S	251	Wife and himself members of LGPS
Curtis M	251	Wife and himself members of LGPS
Downes P	251	Beneficiary of LGPS
McGuire M	251	Member of LGPS
McGuire V	251	Husband is a Member of LGPS
Read P	251	Member of Pension Scheme
Sadiq T	251	Has a 2 year old child receiving childcare

The following Member declared a personal and prejudicial interest under paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct:

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Details</b>
Melton A	251	Daughter a serving police officer was in the LGPS as was wife being the clerk to Chatteris Town Council.

**249. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions were received.

**250. PETITIONS**

No petitions were received.

**251. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GOVERNANCE OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE AND CONSEQUENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Count, and seconded by Councillor Guyatt, that Council receive a report from the Director of Legal Services and the Monitoring officer on proposed changes to the governance of the Pensions Committee and consequential constitutional amendments.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the proposed changes to the governance arrangements for the Council's Pensions Committee and the consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution to take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

Authorise the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Pension's Committee, to implement the changes as set out in the report and appendices and make any other amendments to the Constitution necessary or incidental to the implementation of these proposals.

Appoint new members to the Pensions Committee as necessary, such appointments to take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

[The chairman and vice chairman abstained from voting]

**252. REVISIONS TO THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONSEQUENTIAL CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Clarke, and seconded by Councillor M McGuire, that Council receive a report from the Director of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer on proposed revisions to the Member's Code of Conduct and consequential constitutional amendments, subject to deleting the words 'having first decided whether the code should include' in the first recommendation and replacing this with the word 'including'.

The Liberal Democrat Group expressed concern about the proposed membership of the new Constitution and Ethics Committee and indicated that they would be giving up one of their allocated places to the Labour Group. This would help facilitate the recommendation in paragraph 4.9 of the report that the proposed new

Hearings Panel should be made up of members from different political groups.

It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the content of the proposed Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Members' Code of Conduct including the optional paragraph concerning non statutory interests (paragraph 10).
- b) Approve the arrangements for ensuring high standards of conduct including the establishment of a Constitution and Ethics Committee.
- c) Authorise the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Vice-Chairman of Council to implement, within the timescales specified in the relevant commencement order, the changes as set out in the report and appendices and to make any other amendment to the Constitution necessary or incidental to the implementation of these proposals.
- d) Authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, to take all necessary steps towards the selection of a suitable candidate to be recommended to Full Council for appointment as an Independent Person.
- e) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to grant dispensations in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act.

[Voting pattern: Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour, UKIP, Green Party in favour, Councillors Harrison and Pellew and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained.]

## **253. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 AND STRATEGIC WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

It was proposed by Councillor K Reynolds, Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Group and seconded by Councillor R West, that the Council receive the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Work Programme for 2011/12 and the proposed Strategic Work Programme for 2012/13.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairmen present drew attention to a number of key points and thanked Scrutiny and Improvement Officers for their assistance and support during the year. Other members paid tribute to the non partisan way the chairmen had conducted the business of the committees.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the strategic work programme for 2012/13.

[The chairman and vice chairman abstained from voting]

## **254. MOTIONS**

Two motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

**(a) Motion from Councillor S van de Ven)**

It was proposed by Councillor T Stone (in the absence of Councillor van de Ven) and seconded by Councillor B Brooks-Gordon that:

Council notes

- Cambridgeshire County Council has no dedicated transport strategy for young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- This omission is an obstacle to potential opportunities for those young people.

Council therefore

- Requests Cabinet to commission work at an early stage of the forthcoming Integrated Planning Process for meaningful provision for transport for young people seeking to enter into education, employment or training.

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

[Voting pattern: Labour, Liberal Democrats, Green, UKIP and Independent in favour; Conservatives against; Chairman and Vice-Chairman abstained].

**(b) Motion from Councillor Peter Downes**

It was proposed by Councillor P Downes and seconded by Councillor K Bourke that:

This council notes that:

- research has shown the importance of early years schooling for long-term academic performance and life chances, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- there is a shortage of early years places in many parts of Cambridgeshire, including Godmanchester, St Neots, Huntingdon, Cambridge and Ely, as shown by the council's own evidence;
- the government's policy to provide free early years childcare or nursery places for children aged 2+ who are eligible for free school meals and this, combined with demographic trends, increases the importance of this issue;
- providing adequate nursery and childcare capacity enables parents to enter full or part-time employment, benefitting both the local economy and family income.

Therefore, Council calls on Cabinet to consider taking the necessary measures to provide or enable the childcare market to provide the essential increase in capacity.

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

[Voting pattern: 2 Labour, Liberal Democrats, Green, UKIP and Independent in favour; Conservatives against, 1 Labour member against, Chairman and Vice-

Chairman abstained].

## 255. QUESTIONS

### a) Oral Questions

Sixteen questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 9.1, as set out in **Appendix B**. In response to these questions, the following items were agreed for further action:

- In response to a question from Councillor Pellew, the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor Orgee, agreed to provide a written response to all members on the approximate amount of money spent annually on traffic lights in terms of their maintenance and running costs.
- In response to a question from Councillor Brooks-Gordon, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed to meet with her to discuss further the possibility of members of the public donating subscriptions to libraries to provide weekly or monthly publications not provided by a library.
- In response to a question from Councillor Dutton, the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor Orgee agreed to meet with Councillor Dutton on site with the relevant groups requesting a crossing outside the Saxongate Centre, Huntingdon.
- In response to a question from Councillor J Reynolds, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning Councillor Bates agreed to ensure that officers liaised with the Environment Agency and the riparian landowners to ensure action was taken to remove the rubbish currently blocking the Beck and Washpit brooks watercourses which had contributed to the flooding in Girton.
- In response to a question from Councillor J Reynolds, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning agreed to meet with him on site with officers in relation to viewing the road bridge at Girton on the Oakington road with a view to looking into the possibility of improving its capacity to deal with flood waters from the streams referred to above.
- In response to a question from Councillor Stone, the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure Councillor Orgee agreed to look very carefully into the issue of protecting the remaining road verges with botanical interest from further de-selection and to consider restoring those currently considered to be in an unfavourable condition.
- In response to a question from Councillor Jenkins, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed to review the situation at Histon Infant School in order to determine whether there was anything that could be done to facilitate two five year olds currently attending Orchard Primary School (as Histon Infant School was oversubscribed) being able to attend the latter school.
- In response to a question from Councillor Downes, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor Harty, agreed to discuss with Councillor David Brown, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services and officers undertaking a forward plan to take forward the three priorities identified in the DfE Report "Action Research in the evolving Role of the Local Authority in

Education” and agreed to also come back to Councillor Downes in relation to the open meeting being planned in October to discuss this and the other issues raised to which all parties would be invited.

- In response to a question from Councillor Reeve, Councillor Lucas, the Vice Chairman of the Police Authority, requested that Councillor Reeve provide details of the letter he had received in relation to the future status of the Casualty Reduction Officer post, in order that he could provide a detailed response. He also undertook to ensure that the issues Councillor Reeve had raised were taken into account before any final decisions were made in relation to the Road Policing Unit.
- In response to a question from Councillor Nethsingha, the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure undertook to review the risk routes included in the Winter Gritting programme to ensure that the routes were appropriate in relation to the laid down criteria and also agreed to her request to consider whether Adams Road, Cambridge and the major cycle route from the City Centre out to the west Cambridge site met the criteria for inclusion in the primary route list. He agreed he would get back to her with the results.
- In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, agreed to look into the progress of paying compensation to Trumpington residents who had lost land as part of the compulsory purchase process in relation to the construction of the Guided Busway.
- In response to a question from Councillor Farrer, the Vice Chairman of the Police Authority, requested that Councillor Farrer provide him the details of his concerns on the number of Police Service officers on duty in St Neots on the Saturday in question, so he could pass it on to ensure the Councillor received a full response.
- In response to a request from Councillor Wilkins, the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure would follow up at a future date exploring providing bus ticket machines at other recognised busy bus stops in the county, indicating that there was some money available.

#### **b) Written Questions**

Four written questions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2, as set out in **Appendix C**.

#### **256. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Powley, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor K Reynolds, and agreed unanimously to make a number of changes to membership of committees and appointments to outside organisations as set out in **Appendix D**.

Chairman

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012  
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PEOPLE**

**Corporal Alex Guy**

It is with regret that the Chairman reports the death of Corporal Alex Guy from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment who was killed during an operation targeting insurgents in Afghanistan on 15 June 2012. He was killed while leading his section to assist a group of Afghan soldiers pinned down by enemy fire during an insurgent ambush in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand province. Corporal Guy, from St Neots in Cambridgeshire, had been in the army for 19 years and served on eight operational tours including Bosnia, Iraq, three of Northern Ireland and three of Afghanistan.

The UK's military role in Afghanistan since 2001 has brought with it a heavy human toll. Members of the Army, RAF, Royal Marines and Special Forces from Cambridgeshire, who have lost their lives in the fight against the Taliban include:

- Warrant Officer Colin Beckett
- Private Robert Hayes
- Rifleman Andrew Fentiman
- Flight Sergeant Gerard Bell

**Mary Bliszczyk MBE**

Congratulations go to Mary Bliszczyk who has been awarded an MBE for services to school food in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Mary joined the Cambridgeshire school meals service in 1976 as a Catering Assistant in Peterborough before becoming the School Caterer at Orton Longueville School. During this time she completed her City and Guilds qualification at Peterborough College on day release and in 1983 progressed into the role of Area Supervisor. In 1991 Mary moved into the role of Training Officer for Cambridgeshire Catering Service (CCS) and six years ago was promoted to her present role of Training Co-ordinator.

With her team, Mary delivers craft, theory and all mandatory courses. In addition, she develops training programmes for a variety of internal courses which take place at the CCS training kitchen in Huntingdon. Mary's responsibilities also include menu planning and recipe testing. In addition to her role at CCS, Mary has worked at many different catering establishments in Peterborough in the evenings and at weekends. She has also taught Food Safety at Peterborough City College Saturday school.

**Councillor Sheila-Friend MBE**

Congratulations also go to East Cambridgeshire District Councillor and former Cambridgeshire County Councillor Sheila Friend-Smith on being awarded an MBE for services to Local Government in East Cambridgeshire.

## **Poll of English Council Leaders and Chief Executives**

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive, has been included in the list of the top five 'most impressive' chief executives in a poll of English Council Leaders and Chief Executives conducted by Ipsos Mori for the Municipal Journal.

## **AWARDS**

### **Alder Close, March**

A Council respite service for adults with learning disabilities has been given top marks in every category after a visit by Government inspectors. The service in Alder Close, March, recently underwent an unannounced routine inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was found to be performing well in all aspects of the inspection.

The centre provides respite care for up to five people at a time with overnight and weekend stays. In total Alder Close provides support and services to around 40 people.

CQC inspectors spoke to service users, families and carers. They reported that people were positive about the care and support provided and the variety of activities available. Relatives interviewed were complimentary about the service and staff and found what was provided met their relative's needs well.

### **Jasmine House in Upherds Lane, Ely**

A Council-run residential home for adults with learning disabilities has been given top marks in every category after a visit by Government inspectors. Jasmine House in Upherds Lane, Ely, recently underwent a routine inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was found to be performing well in all aspects of the inspection.

The house provides residential care and support for six people who were interviewed as part of the inspection process. Inspectors also spoke to staff working at Jasmine House. Service users were positive and complimentary about the support they received. The CQC inspectors report, said: "We received positive comments from people about how they were respected and treated by staff and people told us that the care they were being given helped them achieve the things they wanted to do."

The outcome of the CQC inspection is an excellent achievement by everyone involved with Jasmine House and a reflection of the hard work, empathy and dedication that the staff team put into supporting those people who really need it.

### **Longstanton Exhibition Centre**

Longstanton Exhibition Centre at the Longstanton Park and Ride site has won a Highly Commended award in the category of Design and Innovation at the 2012 Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards for the East of England. It was also recently awarded a Bronze Green Apple Award in the Green Apple International Built Environment and Architectural Heritage Awards. The building produces more electricity than it needs via its photovoltaic cells, which enables the Council to sell electricity back to the grid creating income for the Council.

### **Trading Standards Institute Local Heroes Award**

Every year the Trading Standards Institute recognises the contributions of members of the



public to their communities through the Hero Awards. This year young people of Cambridgeshire have been recognised through these awards. The Kick Ash programme of work aims to tackle underage smoking through the use of mentors. These young people support a variety of work and have helped deliver some excellent results. They are truly worthy recipients of the Institute's Local Heroes Award.

### **Cambridge Archaeological Unit**

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit has won two prizes out of the six judged at the British Archaeological Awards at the British Museum. The Must Farm, Whittlesey, excavations in 2011 came through in the Best Archaeological Project and Best Archaeological Discovery categories.

## **SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund**

The Government has announced that the Council's £5m bid to the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund has been successful. The funding award will unlock further funding of £4.2 million to be spent on transport improvements.

The programme is aimed at enhancing journey choice in two important economic areas in Cambridgeshire. The first area covers the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury, Huntingdon, St Ives, the Science Park area and Cambridge, and the second covers Ely, the Science Park area and Cambridge.

The programme will focus on improving links to key employment areas and to transport interchanges, such as railway stations and Busway stops, making it easier for people to travel from home to work, and to other key destinations. Improvements will range from infrastructure schemes such as new or improved pedestrian and cycle routes, to cycle parking and enhanced signage and travel information. The funding will also hasten the delivery of the new cycle parking facility at Cambridge station.

## **MESSAGES**

### **High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire**

Mrs Penelope Walkinshaw, the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire will be present at the Council meeting on 17th July.

### **Standards Committee**

The Council's Standards Committee met for the last time on 27 June 2012. The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, would like to thank the Committee particularly the Independent Members for their diligent service to the Standards Committee over the years.

### **Olympic Torch Relay and Inaugural Big Bike Ride**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, would like to thank the staff who have worked over the last few months and at the weekend of 7/8 July to make the Olympic Torch Relay in Cambridgeshire a huge success. He would also like to thank all those involved in organising the inaugural Big Bike Ride on 8 July.

## **Olympics and Paralympics Teams**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, would like to offer the best of luck to athletes from Cambridgeshire taking part in the Olympics and Paralympics. The Chairman also, on behalf of the Council, would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those County Council staff who have volunteered to be Gamesmakers for the forthcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games and to wish them all the best as they help make these events a success.

## CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN ACTIVITIES: 15 MAY – 17 JULY 2012

### Chairman's engagements

Since 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (previous Council meeting)

#### May 2012

- St Ives mayor making ceremony – St Ives Corn Exchange
- Visit to Kreis Viersen for European Concert of Friendship
- Opening ceremony – Cambridge City Youth Games Festival
- Citizenship ceremony – Shire Hall
- 2012 Memorial Day ceremony – American Cemetery, **Madingley**
- **Royal Garden Party – Buckingham Palace**

#### June 2012

- Flag-raising ceremony and unveiling of portrait of The Queen – Huntingdonshire District Council
- Gates Cambridge: A Vision for the Future – Fitzwilliam College
- Diamond Jubilee service – Ely Cathedral
- Beacon lighting – Shire Hall
- Two Citizenship ceremonies – Shire Hall
- Welcome event for Friends of Kreis Viersen – Shire Hall
- Summer reception – Norfolk County Council
- St Ives Town Council Civic Parade and service
- Diamond Jubilee picnic – Burghley House
- Mayor's Open Day, Peterborough City Council
- Opening of Pippin's Children's Centre, Melbourn
- Viva Awards – Soham
- Annual Civic Leaders' tour – RAF Alconbury
- University of Cambridge honorary degree ceremony – Senate House
- Cambridge Cruse AGM – Landbeach
- High Sheriff's summer reception – Swaffham Prior
- Installation of Mayor of Peterborough – Peterborough Cathedral
- Armed Forces Day flag-raising ceremony – Shire Hall
- Children's Picture Book awards – St Ives Corn Exchange
- Shakespeare at The George – Huntingdon
- Fenland District Council Armed Forces Day – St Peter's Church, March
- St Neots Town Council Armed Forces Day – Eaton Socon

#### July 2012

- USAFE summer reception – RAF Mildenhall
- American Independence Day reception and fireworks – RAF Alconbury
- East of England Show – Peterborough
- Luminus Community Inspiration Awards 2012 – Huntingdon
- Olympic Torch Relay welcome – Anglia Ruskin University
- Wisbech Town Council civic service
- Lincolnshire County Council Chairman's service of dedication – Lincoln Cathedral

- Citizenship ceremony – Shire Hall
- Essex County Council Chairman’s annual reception – Billericay
- Official opening of Peckover Primary School – Wisbech
- Fenland District Council Chairman’s reception – Thomas Clarkson Community College
- Hertfordshire County Council Chairman’s Jubilee garden party – Hertford
- Huntingdon Town Council civic services - Huntingdon

### **Vice-Chairman’s engagements**

#### **Since 15<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (previous Council meeting)**

##### **May 2012**

- St John Ambulance Service – Peterborough Cathedral
- Cambs County Forum Reserve Forces and Cadet Association for East Anglia – briefing for Civic Leaders

##### **June 2012**

- Two Citizenship ceremonies – Shire Hall
- Proclamation of Midsummer Fair – Cambridge
- Cambridge University Air Squadron annual reception – Cambridge

##### **July 2012**

- Citizenship ceremony – Shire Hall
- Sea Sunday service - Huntingdon

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012  
MINUTE 255 (a) - ORAL QUESTION TIME**

**1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance Councillor  
S Count from Councillor P Sales**

Does the Council have any money invested with Barclays and if so how much?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance Councillor  
S Count**

I think that the responsibility for that question would lie with me, I do not have any figures but the question was raised so I had a small amount of information. I understand that we use Barclays for some of our cash or cheque accounts and things of that nature, but I do not believe we use them as an investment vehicle for anything substantial. As to the impact of recent events I don't think there has been any impact on our pension funds at this point in time but we will of course monitor the situation should it change and then we will look at it accordingly.

**2. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor  
T Orgee from Councillor I Manning**

Can you outline what plans there are in place or what procedure you would use where there are buses that are no longer subsidised or were previously subsidised that were under a commercial trial that may or may not succeed, if that commercial trial fails. Can you outline how you would actually deal if there is a social need for that service and the commercial trial fails how would you assess and make sure that you don't have any huge gap when the commercial trial stops and there is a need to provide that service, how would the Council provide that service?

**Reply from to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor  
T Orgee**

I am going to disregard the word trial and take the word commercial service because in looking at the totality of bus services and some subsidised and some commercial, there's an issue about taking bus subsidies away from certain services, but there is also an issue when commercial services change, so that areas that were served by that commercial service are no longer served and I think that's the thrust of your question. In such circumstances that information has come to the future transport group and we have looked at individual circumstances where that has arisen, we are look at each case on its merit because we do recognise that certain communities that are presently served and expect to be served in the future and then there's a change in a commercial sense, which takes those communities off that route, those communities are affected in just the same way as if a subsidised service was no longer funded and that service stopped. Yes we do look at those cases on a case by case basis.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure,  
Councillor T Orgee from Councillor I Manning**

Yes very briefly, I'm not expecting him to answer the specific point of a bus in my

division presumably in that case there is a list or a risk register of services and will he undertake to put the 16 or 17 on that list if it exists.

**Reply from to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

Basically we only find out about these services when the bus company decides to deregister a service or alter the route of a service. So at that point unless anyone has got advance information which we are always grateful to receive, it's only at that point that we find out which services are going to be affected and what the change in routes are going to be and which communities are going to be affected.

**3. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor A Pellew**

This question regards the possibility of switching off traffic lights to improve traffic flow as suggested by Councillor Harrison. I'm aware that there is a need to identify some trial sites across the County and in light of this can I ask for some criteria for the selection of sites for a trial to be circulated to members?

**Reply from to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

Thanks very much for that question you are one of a number of members who have actually suggested specific sites to me. First of all I think we ought to say a big thank you to Councillor Harrison for the films that she laid on in room 128, that was very illuminating and at the very least gave us a serious pause for thought to see what are the best ways forward. If we take this forward then certainly the appropriate way to go would be to have some trial sites and if we have some trial sites I would hope those trial sites were not only within Cambridge City but also in some of our other market towns for example to see the value of such an approach. I think it's fair to say that we haven't yet worked up criteria but I would be very happy to receive individual suggestions from members and as I say there are a number of Councillors sat around the chamber who have already indicated possible locations for such pilot schemes.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor A Pellew**

On the actual cost of traffic lights across the County is it possible that you could circulate the approximate amount of money we spend on traffic lights, maintenance and running costs?

**Reply from to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I'm very grateful that you didn't ask me to give you those figures here and now, but yes, I am happy to get officers to provide that support / information to all members.

**4. Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty from Councillor B Brooks-Gordon**

At a time when libraries are having to face reduced expenditure and many of the weekly or monthly publications are being withdrawn, there may be a number of people who use and value the local library and would be willing to donate a subscription for publication

in the same way as it's possible to do for a present for somebody. Clearly it would be for the library to determine the criteria for accepting any publications as they do at the moment and a senior officer at Cambridge Central Library has responded positively to an informal approach as I was exploring this so what I would like to ask the Cabinet member is would he agree to explore this with me as well?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty**

I would be delighted to explore this with you.

**5. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor J Dutton**

For several years we have been trying to get a crossing outside of the Saxongate Centre in Huntingdon where no less than eight people now have been knocked out of their wheelchairs on this notorious bend. Several other people have been knocked over crossing the road in that same place which is a major thoroughfare from the car parking areas. My question is when can we see some action on this in Huntingdon? The Town Council have agreed to part fund some sort of crossing, the disabled people themselves have offered to fund raise to try and push it forward and yet we seem to be getting conflicting information from officers, can we get some joined up thinking please?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I'm very happy to meet with Councillor Dutton on site with some of the groups he has mentioned, to see exactly what the problems are at first hand and see how we can take the matter forward.

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

I have a question for Councillor Bates regarding flooding in Girton last Friday and Saturday. People will probably have seen and heard of the events of the flooding from the Beck Brook and from the Washpit Brook that overflowed into some 12 or so homes in Girton. Also flooded was a significant amount of garden land for some 12/14 additional homes. I was very pleased at the response made by council officers in both South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council in getting sandbags brought to the site which helped to mitigate some of the problems. We're very grateful for that but I'm sure Council sympathy will go out to all those people who have been affected very seriously due to that particular flooding. Because it's not the first time it's happened, it happened in 2001 and it happened before that on a number of occasions. There is some history and the question really is about what can be done by the various partners to reduce the problem and hopefully eliminate the problem in the future. So could the portfolio holder tell me what action he is going to take to ensure that the Environment Agency, the Landowners that have riparian rights alongside those banks take due action to maintain those watercourses in a fit state, because at the moment they are full of rubbish and clearly are contributing to the flooding that occurred.

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

Thank you Mr Chairman and a very important question it is at this time, when we're all faced with the excess water that seems to be coming down from the sky. I think that the first thing to say if you could perhaps ask Councillor Reynolds to pass on our thanks

to all those authorities but particularly actually perhaps to some sympathy for the houses which have actually been flooded because that's actually I can't think of something worse that might happen that your house might be flooded it must put them into a very difficult position, so please pass any help that we can give. I think it is a very important issue and all authorities need to take responsibility, whether it's the Environment Agency, the District Council, the Parish Councils, the Landowners in particular because often ditches and ducts belong to landowners and it is very important. As I'm sure Councillor Reynolds is aware, that under the new Acts of Parliament the County has got responsibility for surface water, we do work well with all those agencies and I will certainly bring it to the attention of the appropriate officer to ensure that perhaps we can get these ditches cleaned up in particular in the area that and I'm certainly aware of the situation that he brings to our attention. I think it's not just in this area but all the other areas as well, we do need to keep the pressure up on particularly landowners and the agencies to ensure that they keep ditches clean at all times.

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

I welcome that comment and I'll certainly convey that to those residents that have been adversely affected as a result of the flooding. Could I ask another question related to that and first of all thank the officers of the County Council and the District Council for working in Thornton Road, last week to remove some of the vegetation etc which has prevented that particular area also suffering from flooding. The issue I think is more for the longer term in respect of the Girton issue and that is that there is a road bridge which all of those two streams flow under and the water was at least two or three feet higher than the peak of the arch over the week-end and clearly that bridge does not have the capacity to take that amount of water through it and that has been exacerbated by a significant number of surface pipes that have been placed across the river by various agencies below the water line and that is reducing the amount of water that can get through. Some seven or eight years ago work was done to improve the crossing of the two brooks in Oakington and I think probably the same thing needs to be considered for the one in Girton on the Oakington Road to increase the capacity of that particular stream to go through that bridge.

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

I'm not familiar with the particular bridge and therefore my suggestion is that I'm happy to meet on site with residents to discuss it with appropriate officers. I think that is the sensible way forward because when you're talking of bridges, ditches and culverts and the like it's sometimes better to see them and then you're aware. I'm happy to arrange that with the appropriate officers.

**7. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor T Stone**

This is in the hope that this Council can take interest in protecting our environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The background is that of the 116 road verges identified since 1985 as having high botanical interest, 15 have simply been deselected and of those remaining, 27 have definitely decreased in interest over time. By June this year there were 68 protected roadside verges left, two are in favourable condition, 15 are in part favourable and unfavourable condition, 38 are in unfavourable condition though of those 38, two are considered to be recovering. The condition of 13



is unknown pending this year's survey. Those statistics are not good, will the Cabinet member undertake not to allow any further verges to be deselected and ensure that steps are taken to restore those verges recorded as being an unfavourable condition.

**Reply the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

Thank you very much I'm very grateful to Councillor Stone for telling me he was going to ask me a question on this issue. The figures that he quotes are not good and we will look very, very carefully at the road verges, I did answer a question at the last Council meeting in which I referred to equity and fairness as far as Parish Councils were concerned in undertaking some work and I hoped to be in a position today to say something more definitive about that particular point. We are still working on that and I hope to have an answer for the Council shortly.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor T Stone**

Will the Cabinet member assure that the County issues clear instructions and guidance to those responsible for managing and monitoring maintenance, so that they are not only understand, but also take the actions needed to perform their duties correctly?

**Reply the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I am very happy to look into that, there is a protected verge very close to where I live. It's a part of a long continuous road the protected verge has not been cut recently and looks magnificent. The following section of road has just been cut last week and looks an absolute mess and disaster by comparison. So I think proper management of road verges is extremely important and I'm pleased to say that this one particular protected road verge that I'm most familiar with is looking absolutely magnificent and Councillor Stone obviously knows where I'm talking about. I have had notification from some other Councillors of possible questions but I'm very happy to answer questions from Councillor Sadiq about Cambridge Station outside the meeting and I understand that Councillor Shepherd has a concern about resident's parking, I've seen some emails and if she's going to ask a question about that, I'm happy to take that up with her outside the meeting as well.

**8. Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty from Councillor D Jenkins**

The previous Government in its wisdom set a limit to the number of children in infant school classes, the objective was to get local authorities to provide sufficient resources to enable all children to get the benefit of being taught in small classes. Some authorities took it the other way and used it as a license to send children who lived in over subscribed communities to schools that were undersubscribed but in different communities. Would Councillor Harty agree that such behaviour is contrary to the intentions of the legislation and is to the severe disadvantage of the children concerned? Councillor Harty, I will be listening carefully for a yes or no.

**Reply the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty**

The answer is yes.

### **Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty from Councillor D Jenkins**

Councillor Harty is probably aware that Histon Infant School is oversubscribed and that this year two five year old children are being sent to Orchard Park Primary School. That's a journey of two or three miles including a crossing of the A14 and will see these children experiencing their first formal education in a different community and away from their friends. Their parents will need to plan specifically for the school run and it will be a long day for the five year olds. It's a pattern repeated for many families across the County and chair, for your information, the families of both children have made complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman. It's not the job of individual families to provide school places, it's the responsibility of this Council and when it gets its numbers wrong you might expect it to do a little bit more to ensure that the children affected do not suffer as a result. Will Councillor Harty review the situation at Histon and determine what the Council can do to enable the two five year olds to attend their local community school?

### **Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty**

The simple answer is yes I will do that as quickly as possible.

### **9. Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty from Councillor P Downes**

Just a short background and then a question and a request. As I alluded to earlier in the debate this morning the change in our local authorities and responsibilities for education is evolving very, very rapidly, in fact as an unprecedented case and leaving to one side whether that is good or bad, which is another whole debate I think its reached a point where we do have think very carefully about where we stand as a local authority and what we are going to do. In the last few weeks two very important reports have been published, one by the Department for Education (DfE) called "Action Research in the Evolving Role of the Local Authority in Education" and one of the co-writers is actually Andrew Baxter who a number of us will remember as a Chief Education Officer here and this identifies three priorities for local authorities. Ensuring a sufficient supply of school places; tackling under performance in schools and ensuring high standards and supporting vulnerable children. The difficulty is how are we going to do that and if I may refer just briefly to the second report by the RSA written by Robert Hill who is a senior advisor to the DfE, he says this: "middle tier arrangements are therefore in a state of flux, local authority performance is patchy, central government has taken roles that are unsustainable, the school improvement systems has many positive features but is fragmented and policy incoherence threatens the effectiveness of key reforms". This is important stuff. Therefore my question is this; first of all do you accept that this is now a very significant challenge and my request is that it is so important that we ought in the near future to convene an open meeting of as many members who want to come together with officers to have on a non-party political basis a really serious analysis of what we should be doing and how we might be going forward?

### **Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty**

Thank you Councillor Downes and also for the notice provided of the question. This is a critical area that you have raised and it's good that it should be raised. We do see that the local authority will continue to have a role in schooling and in school improvement regardless of the status of the schools in those Counties. We will make no apology for

continuing to challenge and support the delivery of improved educational outcomes for all children in the County regardless of where they are educated. We have said for sometime that we await the news about LACSEG (Local Authorities Central Services Equivalent Grant) which is imminent with interest, but regardless of it, we will continue to deliver services for children and schools who are at risk of not achieving as much as they might be able to. We are already working on a number of themes to inform our future business planning, including the role of the authority in education and will be keen to work with members as well as with schools to inform this important debate. I acknowledge the points that you have raised, they are very important and I'm going to take up some discussions with Councillor Brown and together with officers we will look at a forward plan and pick up on the points that you have raised. Can I just finally say that in the LGA DfE publication there is a detailed case study highlighting Cambridgeshire Local Authority as an example of innovative best practice in its work to support schools, academies and colleges putting on the right provision post 16 to meet the needs of young people. I will come back to you and we will get something arranged.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty from Councillor P Downes**

Thank you for that reassurance but it is all very well to say we intend to do that, but until we know what the LACSEG regulations are going to be, in other words how much is going to be taken out of local authority grant, we are in a very, very difficult position to make commitments of that kind without impacting on the rest of the services we provide, social care and so on and so forth. What I'm really asking for is the widest possible involvement of members in order to seek a way forward which can have cross party support.

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Learning, Councillor D Harty**

There is no reason at all, we're quite happy with members being part of that process, no difficulty. You have suggested a date in October sometime and I think we will keep to that as a timescale.

**10. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor T Sadiq**

I appreciate the response earlier from Councillor Orgee on my questions about the railway station. Could Councillor Orgee please tell us what feedback he has had from passengers about the operation of the bus interchange at the railway station?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

There has obviously been some feedback from people using the bus interchange because it does seem to be quite a long way to walk from the station to the bus interchange. I've looked back at the consultation that was undertaken and discussions on this issue and if I just look back for a minute at all the documentation on this, it is set out in the County Council's Development Control Committee item 7, of the 14 October 2010. I have to say just looking back at that, that there were hardly any issues raised about the distance of the bus stops from the station. There were other issues and there were slight changes to the bus stops as a result of the consultation, but that was about orientation of the bus stops, as opposed to being a row rather than the location from the station. So if we now look to the future and say what can we do, because these issues weren't raised at the time, the Committee came to a unanimous decision to approve the

scheme as it was laid out and I think there were two issues, first of all information, so that people know where to go get the buses and a display is being commissioned and I understand that a meeting is taking place either on Friday this week or Monday of next week about that. Perhaps more importantly, work is being undertaken to see if some additional exits from the station can be provided closer to where the bus stops are, so people have to walk a shorter distance. So it's information and hopefully making the physical environment easier for people to use.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor T Sadiq**

Thank you very much for that, it's a helpful response. I would just like to ask the Cabinet member if he would also take into account the particular needs of elderly people and those who are less mobile, particularly if they've also got luggage. It has been reported that it's very difficult for them to get to the right stop in time and often they see the buses going straight past and they are not there in time to catch them. Also the information that for people visiting the City making it much clearer for them to know which buses to get to the City centre and which buses to get towards Addenbrookes which are the two key destinations, which is not very clear at the moment.

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I hope the information will be provided and will address specifically that issue. We should just remember that this interchange is not complete at this site, there's further work to be done to complete it and hopefully once it's complete it will be clearer physically anyway, but we are putting in these measures to alleviate the situation and address the issues that you have generally raised.

**11. Question to the Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor V Lucas from Councillor P Reeve**

A number of constituents and police officers have raised concerns about the position of the casualty reduction officer potentially being moved, in the last throes of the current police authority, to becoming a civilian role, instead of a police officer role. I would like to ask him if he could do all that he can to ensure that the role remains a police officer post for a number of reasons, largely credibility based, but also it requires a police officer to really get to grips with that role properly and lots of people have said this. The model act the police authority are looking at is a Bedfordshire model based on using civilians but we've got a number of examples where actually other authorities use much more senior police officers in that role than we have done because they see that position as being absolutely critical to the role of casualty reduction in their areas. Please would you do all that you can to raise this concern at the next meeting of the Police Authority and to try and make sure that at least a decision isn't made prior to the new regime coming on board and to also point to the excellent work being done by Councillor Sadiq and the team in the member led review who might well find that some of their conclusions and I wouldn't pre-empt those conclusions, but some of their conclusions have already been muted by this potential decision of the Police Authority ahead of their conclusion.

**Reply from the Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor V Lucas**

Could I thank Councillor Reeve for giving me a little advance warning that he was going to be asking a question of that type. In fact it relates I think to a question from a specific

constituent or member who is a police officer and if Councillor Reeve would like to send me the particular details I will respond equally in detail. It does raise the wider issue with regard to all the collaboration initiatives that are taking place between the Police Authority and those of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, it's one of several areas the Road Policing Unit being considered, no final decisions have been made in that area, which is why the question is very timely to make sure that the points that Councillor Reeve has made will be taken into account, before any decisions are reached but just to remind everybody that in the beginning of the summer the Police Authority did publish a list of those areas which we were investigating / collaborating with.

**12. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor L Nethsingha**

I have a very specific question to ask Councillor Orgee if he would look at a gritting route within my ward? It may seem a strange time of year to ask about the review of gritting routes but in winter it will be too late to change things. The particular route I want to be re-considered is Adams Road and ideally more broadly the major cycle route from the City Centre out to the west Cambridge site. This route is a critical artery for non-motor traffic, particularly cyclists for two important centres in the City, allowing those who cycle and walk to continue to use this route in cold weather can have a big impact on congestion on the rest of the network. The route is at present on the secondary gritting list but that means that residents cannot rely on it being gritted and thus do not always feel confident to use the route in icy weather. The road is one with an unusually steep gradient for this area and it can be very slippery in icy conditions, there were several cases of people coming off of their bikes last year. Please will the Cabinet member have a look whether it's possible to extend this to within the primary gritting system?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

This is not an inappropriate time to be considering the winter gritting routes, the report did go to a scrutiny committee very recently about this whole issue and yes it's better to be much more in advance of situations before situations arise. So yes we are going to look at the risk routes to make sure that routes are appropriate and for them to fit in the criteria and on their own particular circumstances. So I'm happy to look at that.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor L Nethsingha**

Will you get back to me when you've done that?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I may well do so.

**13. Question to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning Councillor I Bates, from Councillor C Shepherd**

It's about the non-payment of compensation to some people in Trumpington who live alongside the guided bus and are due compensation for the compulsory purchase of their gardens for the guided bus. I found out some weeks ago that they haven't been paid their compensation and I was amazed at that and I did some enquiries and did some digging and there have been some activities since, lawyers have done a few things. But as I stand here today not a single penny in compensation has been paid to

the people for their land and so I do wonder if you share my amazement that a year or so after the buses are running people still do not have compensation for compulsory purchase and I wonder if you could look at this as a matter of some urgency to try and get it up the in trays of the lawyers and not wishing to offend anyone, but some people have their own agendas, and I wonder if you could speed this up to get this done really urgently.

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

I'm certainly aware of some of the issues which have just been raised, I'm certainly happy to take that away bearing in mind we're talking of individuals and compensation and lawyers maybe that's best dealt with outside of the chamber with the appropriate lawyer or Executive Director. So I am happy to take that away but I am certainly aware of what you've brought to our attention, as you know I'm aware and I'm happy to look into it further.

**14. Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor S Whitebread**

Congratulations first of all on winning funding from the Better Bus Area Funded, that's excellent news for Cambridge in particular and for my ward and would you agree with me that when you're looking at removing the taxi rank from St Andrew's Street that we need to have full consultation with all the groups that will be effected by that particularly the elderly and disabled who find it difficult to access the City Centre and sometimes need to use taxis.

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

With an issue such as that I'm sure we do need to engage in the fullest possible consultation to make sure that all views are well known when decisions are taken.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee from Councillor S Whitebread**

One thing that has occurred to me and my City Council colleagues representing Market, is because we have this issue with the shuttle bus having been withdrawn and people are more reliant on taxis and if the taxi rank were to be moved to a little bit further away from centre of the City then one thing we can do to alleviate the problem that would place on elderly residents would be to reintroduce the City Centre shuttle bus. So is that something that the County Council would consider?

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

I've heard what you have to say and noted it.

**15. Question to the Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor V Lucas from Councillor B Farrer**

My question regards policing in St Neots as I was shocked to find out on Saturday evening that with a 30,000 population and the biggest place after Cambridge and Peterborough, we'd only got two PSO's on duty on a Saturday evening and they've got to cover from Covington right through St Neots right into Buckden. That seems

amazing to me, we've got a police station, we've got cells we just don't have any policemen, can we do anything about this?

**Reply from the Vice-Chairman of the Police Authority, Councillor V Lucas**

It's quite clearly an operational question but if the Councillor will send me the details I'll make sure he does get a response.

**16. Question to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning Councillor I Bates, from Councillor K Wilkins**

Can I ask whether he believes that the off bus ticket machines at the bus stops on the guided busway are value for money or not and why?

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

Personally I pay the driver when I get on the bus but of course concessionary bus fares allow me the privilege not to pay anything at all so I'm happy to look into that particular matter. I'm not quite sure precisely what you are getting to but if you would like to email me with your concerns on that matter I'll happily look into it.

**Supplementary Question to the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning Councillor I Bates, from Councillor K Wilkins**

It seems to me that they are quite good things and I thought that Councillor Bates might know that they improve the reliability of services and they increase the economic viability of the buses and I would ask him and / or Councillor Orgee to ask officers to explore plans in time for next year's budget to see whether there could be more on street machines not just in Cambridge City Centre, but elsewhere as well, so as to help bus services reduce congestion and to give a boost to those bus services that are on the margins of economic viability, such as those that come and go on Milton Road, in my own division.

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

Certainly as indicated in the previous question I think there are some funds now available to us and those issues certainly could be picked up between myself and Councillor Orgee. Not just in the City but also further afield as well because money is available not just for the City and South Cambs so happy to look into that at a future a date.

**Reply from the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, Councillor T Orgee**

You mentioned about economic viability of buses I think it's much wider than that it actually applies to all buses because if you have some buses which are very, very popular and you have a lot of people waiting to get on that can take an inordinate amount of time to actually issue tickets on the buses. So that applies to all buses and I think that is an important suggestion to be followed up.

**COUNTY COUNCIL - 17<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012  
MINUTE 255 (b) - WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**Question from Councillor T Sadiq to the Cabinet Member for Growth and Planning, Councillor I Bates**

Could the Cabinet member for Growth and Planning please set out in detail what plans the Council has for consultation on the design of the new Science Park train station at Chesterton and how it plans to engage local residents, passengers, bus and taxi operators, cyclists, motorists, local businesses and other stakeholders on all aspects of the design and access arrangements?

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

I expect to be in a position to consult all of those with an interest in this project in the autumn. The consultation will aim to engage in particular with both local people and potential users and will specifically include access routes to the station on foot and by bicycle, bus, car and taxi. This is particularly important as our aim is for the station to operate as a transport interchange with high quality links to the Busway, local buses, and major cycle routes.

The results of this consultation will then be used to develop the planning application for the station which we aim to submit in the new year. This will be considered by the Joint Development Control Committee, who will themselves consult on the proposals, as part of the normal planning process, before making their decision.

Given the level of interest in the project we have put a plan on our website which shows the various elements that we plan to provide. At this stage this is simply an indicative layout, which can be expected to change as a result of technical work currently taking place with Network Rail who will own and operate the station.

**Question from Councillor S van de Ven to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

At present the issuing of a new Blue Badge is a weeks-long process, which presents enormous difficulties for people with a sudden onset of severe disability. What is the Council doing to speed up this process?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

The new amended legislation on Blue Badges came into effect from the beginning of January 2012. Prior to this, the County Council administered the whole process for its residents. The resulting changes, whilst making the process more robust and addressing the need to bring in more anti fraud prevention initiatives, have resulted in an increase in administration time for local authorities. This, coupled with the 'up to 10 working days' it now takes to get a badge produced by the national badge provider and received by the customer, has added to the time it has been taking to complete the Blue Badge application process.

It has to be acknowledged that the initial period after implementation showed some teething troubles and this was common across the country. On a national level Cambridgeshire has been working closely with the Department of Transport influencing improvements to the process as well as representing all Local Authorities on the national Project Board.



We have been deploying additional staff to reduce the waiting time for a new badge week on week. Officers are now reviewing applications and contacting customers by the next working day with the outcome of their application and, if successful, requesting copies of the necessary supporting documentation. Once all documentation has been returned we have reduced the administration turn around time which includes preparing the photograph and sending the authorisation record to the badge producer, to 5 working days.

We are continuing to respond to feedback given by applicants and have revised our webpages and letters sent out to applicants to make it easier and clearer for our customers to understand the changes in criteria and which supporting documentation, including photographs, will be required.

In response to the difficulties encountered by some of our applicants in adhering to the different charging system introduced by the postal service, we have recently introduced pre-paid reply envelopes for applicants to use when sending us their supporting documentation. This has significantly reduced the number of documents which were posted by applicants but never received by the Council because the wrong value of stamps was used.

The contract with the national badge producer states they will produce the badge, record the badge details on the national database and have the badge delivered to the customer within 10 working days. Our current experience shows badges are now being delivered to applicants within 5 working days of our authorisation being sent.

For applicants who are required to attend an independent medical assessment of their mobility, the current waiting time for the next available appointment can be up to 4 – 5 weeks particularly where applicants can only attend one of the five centres across the County. We are working with the assessment centres to introduce additional appointments and reduce this waiting time.

For those who experience a sudden onset of severe disability, the question for the administrators of the service is how the disability affects their mobility and whether the condition is regarded to be temporary or permanent. A decision on entitlement to a blue badge will be made based on the effect that particular disability or medical condition is having on the person's ability to walk a set distance without pain or breathlessness. Where there are other factors to consider, such as walking at an extremely slow pace or their manner of walking or where the eligibility is not clear, the applicant may be asked to take part in an independent medical assessment for mobility, unless they already automatically qualify as a result of being in receipt of Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance.

The independent assessors are professional therapists who will assess the actual mobility of the applicant instead of considering only the condition or diagnosis of their disability. The feedback from those who have attended these independent assessments, including those whose application was not successful, shows the majority welcome the focus from the health professionals on their current and future mobility prognosis, with advice being given on how to improve short term and longer term mobility.

As well as working to reduce any backlog of applications and encouraging use of email and online systems where possible in order to speed up the application process, the Contact Centre and Service Transformation teams are carrying out a detailed review of the new Blue Badge service, with the aim of further improving the customer experience and reducing administration time.

**Question from Councillor I Manning to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

Policing and Crime Panels are to have two independent members with appropriate expertise, experience etc.

What is the Council doing to co-opt relevant evidence-based criminological expertise for these posts?"

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

The responsibility for appointing co-options rest with Police and Crime Panel (PCP) not Cambridgeshire County Council. The Council's three members of the PCP, including the nominated Liberal Democratic Councillor, will, no doubt, play a full role in discussing options for co-option with other PCP members, including the Liberal Democrat representative from Cambridge City.

The Officers who will be responsible for servicing the Panel, have suggested that co-options will be an item for the first meeting of the Panel when it meets in Shadow form. This meeting is likely to take place in August. It will be proposed that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will follow the Local Government Association guidelines for appointing co-optees.

**Question from Councillor B Brooks-Gordon to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

What is the County Council doing to ensure that the 'Independent medical assessment' fairly and accurately takes account of invisible disabilities like Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus, and Diabetes, and a) what is the difference in the cost, and b) were any alternatives to this type of assessment sought?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Councillor M McGuire**

The national Blue Badge Improvement Scheme introduced a number of changes which are contained in the amended legislation, including a requirement for all local authorities to use an independent medical assessment of mobility when considering entitlement to a Blue Badge for those applicants who do not meet the 'automatic entitlement' criteria (for example by already being in receipt of Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance.)

The independent assessors are professional therapists who, rather than merely considering the condition or diagnosis made, are required to consider the effect of the permanent disability on a person's ability to walk. They will assess whether the applicant is able to walk and if so whether they have considerable difficulty in walking a set distance without pain or breathlessness, as well as the pace and manner in which they are able to walk. They will also take into account the current and future mobility prognosis, with advice being given on how to improve short term and longer term mobility.

The cost of carrying out an independent medical assessment of mobility is the same regardless of whether the applicant has a known disability such as those named above or has been referred for any other reason.

Cambridgeshire has commissioned Cambridgeshire Community Services in the first instance in order to fulfill the national requirement to have independent assessments with the intention of putting to put this out to tender in due course.

It is worth noting that the independent assessments replace the previous practice of obtaining a GP letter to confirm applicants' mobility difficulties. Our resulting experience and feedback from applicants was that in many cases the GP had not actually seen the applicant for several months, particularly where patients are seeing a consultant on a regular basis and so the letter could not confirm the current position against the required criteria. In many cases the GP commented on the general diagnosis rather than its effect on that patient's mobility.

**COUNTY COUNCIL – 17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012**

**MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

To replace Councillor D Jenkins with Councillor K Bourke as one of the Council's representatives

**AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

To appoint Councillor T Sadiq as a named substitute

**PENSION FUND BOARD (FORMER PENSIONS COMMITTEE) (6)**

MEMBERS		SUBSTITUTES	
Cllr S Count (C)	C	Cllr M McGuire	C
Cllr N Guyatt	C	Cllr P Downes	LD
Cllr V Lucas	C		
Cllr J Reynolds	C		
Cllr J Batchelor	LD		
Cllr L Nethsingha	LD		

**CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE (9)**

MEMBERS		SUBSTITUTES	
Cllr J Clark	C	Cllr G Kenney	C
Cllr G Harper	C	Cllr F Yeulett	C
Cllr V Lucas	C	Cllr C Shepherd	LD
Cllr M McGuire	C	Cllr P Sales	L
Cllr P Read	C		
Cllr K Reynolds	C		
Cllr S van de Ven	LD		
Cllr M Williamson	LD		
Cllr C Carter	L		