

County Council – Minutes

Please note a video recording of the meeting can be viewed on the Council's [YouTube channel](#):

Date: 19 March 2024

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 2:22 p.m.

Present:

Councillors:

Sebastian Kindersley (Chair)

Douglas Dew (Vice-Chair)

David Ambrose Smith

Michael Atkins

Henry Batchelor

Alex Beckett

Gerri Bird

Mike Black

Anna Bradnam

Alex Bulat

David Connor

Steve Corney

Adela Costello

Steve Count

Piers Coutts

Steve Criswell

Claire Daunton

Lorna Dupré

Stephen Ferguson

Jan French

Ryan Fuller

Nick Gay

Mark Goldsack

Bryony Goodliffe

Neil Gough

Ros Hathorn

Anne Hay

Richard Howitt

Samantha Hoy

Bill Hunt

Maria King

Simon King

Elisa Meschini

Brian Milnes

Edna Murphy

Lucy Nethsingha

Catherine Rae

Kevin Reynolds

Tom Sanderson

Josh Schumann

Geoffrey Seeff

Neil Shailer

Alan Sharp

Philippa Slatter

Mandy Smith

Simone Taylor

Firouz Thompson

Steve Tierney

Susan van de Ven

Alison Whelan

Graham Wilson

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Boden, Simon Bywater, Ian Gardener, John Gowing, Mark Howell, Jonas King, Peter McDonald, and Keith Prentice.

199. Minutes – 13 February 2024 and Motions Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The motions log was noted.

200. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made a number of announcements, as set out in Appendix A.

Councillors observed a minute silence in memory of Tina Few, Information Governance Assistant.

201. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

202. Public Question Time

The Chair reported that two public questions had been received from members of the public, as set out at Appendix B.

203. Petitions

The Chair reported that one petition had been received from members of the public, as set out in Appendix C. In the absence of the petitioner, the Chair confirmed that he would provide a written response to the petitioner organiser.

204. Items for determination from Staffing and Appeals Committee

a) Senior Manager Pay Data and Pay Policy Statement

It was moved by the Chair of the Staffing and Appeals Committee, Councillor Murphy, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Staffing and Appeals Committee, Councillor Black, that the recommendation from the Staffing and Appeals Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

approve the Transparency Data and the Chief Officers Pay Policy Statement.

b) Pay Gap Reporting

It was moved by the Chair of the Staffing and Appeals Committee, Councillor Murphy, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Staffing and Appeals Committee, Councillor Black, that the recommendations from the Staffing and Appeals Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

- i) approve the Pay Gap Full Analysis Report; and
- ii) approve and publish the Pay Gap Publication.

205. Committees – Allocation of Seats and Substitutes to Political Groups in Accordance with the Political Balance Rules

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor Kindersley, seconded by the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Dew, and resolved unanimously by affirmation that the allocation of seats and substitutes on committees to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, as set out in the tabled report under Item 7, be approved.

206. Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10

Five motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

a) Motion from Councillor Alex Bulat

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Bulat and seconded by Councillor van de Ven.

The council notes that:

- our armed forces have a long and proud history of service and dedication to the United Kingdom. From overseas deployments to keeping essential services running at home, service personnel continue to serve our country with courage and distinction.
- according to the 2021 Census, the first census collecting data on UK armed forces veterans, the population who has previously served in the armed forces ranges from 1.6% in Cambridge to 4.5% in Huntingdonshire (a range of 2,269 to 8,164 residents respectively). UK armed forces veterans census 2021.
- the 2021 Census recorded 17862 veterans of regular service and 3807 veterans of reserve service living in Cambridgeshire.
- Cambridgeshire is also home to RAF Wyton in Huntingdonshire and Mission Ready Training Centre Bassingbourn in South Cambridgeshire, as well as Reserve Army and Royal Marines, and Cambridge University Officer Training Corps in Cambridge City.

The council welcomes that:

- the community covenant signed by Cambridgeshire Local Authorities in 2011 commits our authority to our Armed Forces community, ensuring that those who serve, and have served in the Armed Forces and their families are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged by their service.
- our Armed Forces Covenant Officer and elected Member representative on the Community Covenant (Military) Board have been doing excellent work to support the Armed Forces Community, promoting fair access to council services as well as engaging with numerous partners from the private, public, charity and voluntary sectors to support a collaborative approach to the work.
- following pressure from lived experience campaign groups, the Government finally scrapped visa fees for Commonwealth veterans.

The council expresses concern that:

- a decade of real terms pay cuts, the cost-of-living crisis and the delays to Armed Forces pay award, is having a direct impact upon Service Personnel and their families while

charities and regimental associations continue to provide cost of living grants and vouchers to veterans and their families.

- service personnel have become routinely called upon to cover for a lack of resilience across the public sector and to cover essential services during industrial action. They do this in the dedicated and professional way we would expect from our forces. However, without a right to strike, it is the moral duty of their leaders to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and the responsibility of elected bodies is to uphold their part of this obligation and insist that our service personnel and their families receive the support they deserve.
- while visa fees are scrapped for Commonwealth veterans, the government refused to remove fees for their spouses and children. With the recent increases in visa fees, families face thousands of pounds in immigration fees during the cost of living crisis. [Royal British Legion](#) statistics state that there are 5100 personnel from foreign and Commonwealth countries currently serving in the UK armed forces.
- following the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, many Afghans have found safety in the UK however, many Afghans are facing homelessness waiting for security over their status, while other eligible Afghans refugees, including those who supported the UK and NATO allies on Afghanistan, remain trapped in Afghanistan.

The council is recommended to commit to:

- work with our District partners and Government to secure sustainable funding for our Armed Forces Covenant officer role, which is essential to delivering the Covenant's objectives locally. The Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund, which previously funded the role, do not have any appropriate funding programmes currently.
- ask the Chief Executive to write to Government to call on it to provide additional basic financial support to service personnel by capping food and accommodation charges for the next 12 months and conduct an immediate review into armed forces accommodation charges, food charges and allowances.
- ask the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary outlining concerns regarding the current support offered to Afghan refugees, asking for appropriate funding to support housing for Afghan refugees and urging the Government to step up plans to allow Afghan refugees who served to get safely to the UK, as well as those stranded in Iran and Pakistan.
- ask the Chief Executive to write to the Minister of State for Immigration and the Minister of State for Veteran Affairs to outline this council's support for all spouses and children of Commonwealth veterans to be granted right to remain at the same time as the serving Commonwealth veteran without fees.

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

b) Motion from Councillor Steve Count

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Count and seconded by Councillor Sharp.

Core purpose: The County Council works with Government and partners to disband the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and move its responsibilities and delegated powers to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayoral Combined Authority (CPCA). Whilst

ringfencing any funding the GCP has secured, specifically to the existing geography of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Council notes that the GCP and the CPCA:

- share some common aims but have on occasion differed in pursuit of solutions.
- have some duplicated bureaucracy that can be slimmed down.
- have some duplicated and potential conflicted decision-making processes.
- could save money by uniting to spend on outcomes rather than back-office functions.
- can accelerate projects by removing a tier of bureaucracy.

Council notes the GCP:

- has lost the credibility and support of many of the residents they are supposed to represent and businesses they are supposed to support.
- spent £4.7m on a failed attempt to introduce a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ), which contained proposals for a congestion charge.
- has built various new footpaths, to less than recommended widths, potentially forcing prams onto busy roads.
- has introduced various highways interventions, which many believe have contributed to rather than alleviated congestion.
- processes surrounding the GCP consultation and subsequent Mill Road Bridge closure decision which has resulted in a costly legal challenge.
- has closed roads and/or introduced modal filters which have meant some journeys take longer and increase congestion and air pollution.

Council is concerned at the way some consultations have been undertaken and been reviewed, by the GCP, and its budgetary controls which have led to controversies such as:

- budget management and or costings leading to the overspend of £7m on the Chisholm trail.
- rewarding Stagecoach repeatedly with public subsidy, whilst failing to hold their performance to account.
- holding back from releasing consultation responses to a road hierarchy scheme for over a year.
- the assembly voting to ignore and not debate the STZ consultation.

Residents within and outside the GCP area have complained about various significant matters such as:

- the outright refusal by the GCP assembly and board to debate the contributions of more than 24,000 residents' responses to the GCP's making connections consultation.
- the equal status of South Cambridgeshire residents in the GCP relationship given the delayed plans for a Foxton travel hub, the delayed segregated Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) without pursuing the improvements available now, and the proposed destruction of an historic orchard whilst refusing to examine alternative proposals.
- the restrictions on free movement of the private motorist, which are repeatedly proposed in the original STZ proposals, new road hierarchy proposals to install gate controls and financial penalties across Cambridge City, and Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council redefining Air Quality standards, which could lead to a new Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) Tax.

This Council recommends the Chief Executive writes to:

- the Government, confirming this council's request to disband the GCP and transfer all funding and responsibilities to the CPCA, expressly requiring the CPCA to ringfence GCP funding to be retained and limited to expenditure incurred by and within the GCP geography.
- its partners at the GCP and CPCA explaining its resolution and inviting them to engage in talks as to how to progress towards that outcome.

Furthermore, Council resolves to make all efforts to disband the GCP whilst retaining funding for the GCP area.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives, 1 Independent and 2 Non-aligned Independents in favour; Liberal Democrats, Labour and 2 Independents against]

c) Motion from Councillor Mark Goldsack

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Goldsack and seconded by Councillor Count.

Core Purpose: Council resolves to resist any attempts made to introduce anymore new local forms of taxation.

This Council notes:

- the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership (GCP) spent £4.7m bringing forward plans for a sustainable travel zone, which included a new tax, referred to as a congestion charge.
- the GCP making connections consultation, indicated a majority of respondents opposed this charge. - the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) under the leadership of the Labour Mayor Nick Johnson voted on plans to introduce a local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP), including proposals supported by the Mayor for the ability to introduce a road charging scheme, which would be a new local tax.
- consideration of other proposals for new forms of taxation have been welcomed and proposed by the leadership of this Council and board members of the GCP including

revisiting the possibility of a workplace parking levy; introducing revenue penalising barriers to free movement, in the form of bus gates across Cambridge City; bringing forward a new air quality policy, which can lead to an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) zone; and changing the congestion charge to make it more acceptable.

- in 2023 the Labour Mayor had already introduced his Mayoral precept, a brand-new form of taxation in our area.

Council recognises Cambridgeshire continues to be and has historically been:

- underfunded across all parts of the public sector.
- one of only two areas outside of London that contribute to the public purse. - recognised by national Government as an area which presents opportunities for improving the public purse.
- one of the fastest growing areas in the country, with the local public purse adversely affected by lag in recognition of true demographic changes.

Council recalls that Cambridgeshire's value to the national public purse was used to secure, in the form of multi-year settlements:

- £500m from Government allocated to create a City Deal, and funding now managed by the GCP.
- £770m from Government allocated to create a Mayoral Combined Authority, and funding now managed by the CPCA.

Furthermore, council recognises that unexpected international inflation and the complexities caused during Covid, and its lasting legacy, has significantly diminished the impact of those funding streams.

Council therefore:

- opposes the introduction of any new locally imposed forms of taxation.
- asks the Chief Executive to engage with partners and realistically cost ambitious transformational strategic infrastructure interventions, sufficient to meet the local and national ambitions for this area.
- asks the Chief Executive to open engagement with Government on how to secure funding for those interventions, whilst ruling out any increases proposed through new forms of a taxation burden on the residents of Cambridgeshire.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives and 1 Non-aligned Independent in favour; Liberal Democrats, Labour, Independents against]

d) Motion from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Nethsingha and seconded by Councillor Meschini.

This Council notes that:

- low turnout is a persistent issue in local government elections with participation, for example, in the last County Council election varying as follows across Cambridgeshire: Cambridge from 38.7% to 51.3%; East Cambridgeshire from 23.4% to 46.8%; Fenland from 24.18% to 33.69%; Huntingdonshire from 27.2% to 43.2%; and South Cambridgeshire from 34.3% to 49.5%.
- engagement with political parties is falling nationally with only 804,000 (1.24%) of British people being assessed as being members of a political party by 2021.
- political engagement is particularly low among those aged under 30 and that the lack of engagement from young people is something which should be of concern for all political parties.

This Council believes that proportional voting systems can help to improve both engagement and tackle polarisation within our political system and will therefore:

- ask the Chief Executive to write to Government asking it to re-introduce the Single Transferrable voting system for the elections for Police and Crime Commissioners and Directly Elected Mayors during this parliament, at the same time expressing regret that the single transferrable voting system was removed from these elections in the first place, and to consider introducing the same voting system for other local elections.
- ask the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee to develop a plan, working with partners in District and Parish Councils, to encourage greater understanding of the role of the different tiers of local government here in Cambridgeshire, and in particular to bring forward proposals about how we can work to better engage with younger people in Cambridgeshire to increase participation in local elections.

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

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents in favour; Conservatives and 1 Non-aligned Independent against]

e) Motion from Councillor Ros Hathorn

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Hathorn and seconded by Councillor Meschini.

The Council notes that:

- the investment and development of the greater Cambridge area to support the Cambridge 2050 'Science Capital of Europe' vision is regarded as critical to the prosperity of not just the region, but the country.
- though different figures often higher figures have been circulated by the Secretary of State, most recently the government has specified 150,000 new homes by 2050 in the south of the county.

The Council further notes that:

- growth of this kind brings with it both significant opportunities and significant challenges for local residents, the scale of which cannot be understated.
- any government committed to drive forward the proposed level of growth must learn from the lessons from local experiences of growth, including but not limited to the ongoing delivery of our new towns, and listen to local voices.
- Government will only realise its vision by taking the challenges we see at local level seriously and helping to deliver solutions cooperatively with all levels of local government.
- Government has recently announced a 'water credits' proposal to allow more housing to get planning consent. It is vital that the strategy for water usage in the area feels credible to residents. Experimental untested approaches imposed locally by government could undermine faith in the process.
- Cambridgeshire is prone to flooding and drought.

The Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to Government, inviting the Council's partners to join in the request to:

- commit to making the benefits and opportunities created by growth accessible to all residents of Cambridgeshire.
- urgently commit to funding and supporting the delivery of essential infrastructure and services required to deliver this scale of growth including:
 - i. water infrastructure to ensure there is sufficient supply to eliminate over-abstraction and protect our chalk streams.
 - ii. flood defences and investment in our current infrastructure to protect against the consequences of climate change.
 - iii. transport infrastructure and improved public transport that makes sure every resident, from every city and district area can access affordable, reliable, regular public transport to be able to benefit from work and education opportunities.
 - iv. Education, Health and Care provision which is properly resourced to grow at pace, particularly primary care where additional support and incentives to sustainably grow the workforce may be required.
- establish ambitious targets for affordable housing so that key workers and other workers on lower incomes who contribute significantly to the Cambridgeshire economy can afford to live locally.
- recognise that the vision of Cambridge 2050 requires a highly skilled workforce and significantly boost investment in training and education to allow everyone in the county the opportunity to join that workforce; including the provision of financial support to targeted programmes for young people not in employment, education or training.

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

207. Questions

(a) Questions on Fire Authority Issue

No questions were submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.1 of the Council's Constitution.

(b) Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 9.2)

One question was submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2, as set out in Appendix D.

Chair

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Chair's Announcements

People

Tina Few, Information Governance Assistant

It is with deep regret that the Chair reports the recent death of Tina Few. Tina became an Information Governance Assistant in 2021 and made a big impact in the role thanks to her positive attitude and cheerful nature. She was a shining example of the Apprenticeship Scheme and how impactful it can be to people keen to develop skills later in life, with her dedication and enthusiasm impressing everyone from her coaches, tutors and not least her colleagues who were so proud of her. The Council's thoughts are with her family and friends at this very sad time.

Jyoti Atri, Executive Director of Public Health

Jyoti Atri, Executive Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, will be leaving both authorities in May to pursue new opportunities.

Upon joining the Councils, Jyoti played an instrumental leadership role in navigating Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through the pandemic and worked tirelessly with Public Health colleagues, local authority partners, and the NHS to keep people safe and to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 was reduced across our communities. She was specifically involved in leading our work relating to Enhanced Response status as an area during Covid.

Laura Hardy, Team Manager for Family Safeguarding (Cambridge City)

Laura Hardy won a gold medal for the 500m freestyle at the European Ice Swimming Championship. She also won three bronze medals in the 250m, 100m, and 50m freestyle categories. Hosted by the International Ice Swimming Association, the championship took place in Romania from 1-4 February 2024, and saw more than 320 athletes from 27 countries compete.

Messages

Peppercorn Lunch

The Chair was delighted to be invited to the Annual Peppercorn Lunch. On behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, he paid the Council's annual fee of a peppercorn to Marshalls for the lease of Newmarket Road Park & Ride site.

Ukrainian Flag raising to mark two years of the war

The Chair was accompanied by Deputy Lieutenant Mr Chris Parkhouse and Chief Executive Dr Stephen Moir in raising the Ukrainian Flag to mark two years of the war in Ukraine.

Mayor of Wisbech's Civic Service

The Chair attended the Mayor of Wisbech's Civic Service at the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wisbech on 25th February.

Cambridgeshire Spotlight Awards

The Chair compered the first ever Cambridgeshire Spotlight Awards which were held at the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge. The event was an opportunity to recognise colleagues for their outstanding achievements in helping to create a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire. A total of 260 nominations were received from across the whole range of council services, from which the judging panel shortlisted 17 individuals and teams.

St David's Day Flag at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the St David's Day Flag at New Shire Hall, to mark a national day of cultural celebration for St David patron saint of Wales.

Installation of Right Reverend Debbie Sellin as the 39th Bishop of Peterborough

On behalf of the Chair, Councillor Stephen Ferguson attended the installation of the Right Reverend Debbie Sellin as the 39th Bishop of Peterborough at Peterborough Cathedral.

Commonwealth Flag at New Shire Hall

The Vice-Chair raised the Commonwealth Flag at New Shire Hall, the theme for Commonwealth Day 2024 and the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is 'One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth.'

St Patrick's Day Flag at New Shire Hall

The Vice Chair raised the St Patrick's Day Flag at New Shire Hall to mark a national day of cultural celebration for St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland.

Citizenship Ceremonies

The Chair attended Citizenship Ceremonies at New Shire Hall on the 19th February and 4th March.

The Vice Chair attended Citizenship Ceremonies at New Shire Hall on the 11th March.

Accompanied by a Deputy Lieutenant the Chair and Vice Chair presented over 100 new British Citizens with their Citizenship.

Public Question Time

1. Question from Fenland District Councillor Lucie Foice-Beard to the Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, Councillor Lorna Dupré.

Thank you. Fenland District Council approached Cambridgeshire County Council asking for them to co-operate in the investigation of a possible judicial review of the decision regarding the energy from waste. Cambridgeshire County Council refused to do so. Cambridgeshire County Council has also failed to respond to Fenland District Council in a request to share any costs of a judicial review. As a resident of Wisbech, I'd like to ask why has the County Council gone back on its commitment to do everything in its power to oppose the incinerator? Thank you.

Response from the Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, Councillor Lorna Dupré

Thank you very much, Chair. Firstly, I'd like to thank Councillor Foice-Beard for her question.

Two days after the debate on the incinerator at Fenland District Council on Monday 26 February, the County Council's Chief Executive wrote to the Corporate Director at Fenland District Council on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council. The position of this Council as stated in that communication was that we are disappointed at the decision of the Secretary of State in regard to this consent. Opposition to this proposal remains our clear, stated, and formal position across all our political groups on this authority. Our understanding of the wording of Fenland District Council's motion is that Fenland District Council would seek counsel's opinion, then approach us to see whether or not we would consider supporting a contribution to a judicial review, if proceeding, along with other parties.

The Fenland District Council motion, as approved, authorised the District Council to obtain counsel's opinion on the merits or otherwise of the case. As a JR is possible only on narrow legal grounds, it seemed to us (and, we believed, to Fenland District Council) that the legal counsel instructed by the District Council would be best qualified to review the decision to see if a JR was likely to succeed, rather than asking officers of this Council to identify potential legal grounds for challenge.

If counsel instructed by Fenland District Council feels that a JR has a reasonable prospect of success, and Fenland advises this Council accordingly, our officers will then be in a position to advise us further. This Council's Chief Executive also sought confirmation of whether Fenland District Council had approached the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Norfolk County Council, or Wisbech Town Council, who were also named in the Fenland motion, for potential cooperation.

This Council has responded to FDC entirely constructively and within the terms of the FDC motion, to confirm that once counsel's advice has been sought and shared with us, we will review and consider it. At this point in time, we have received no such advice from Fenland District Council, so there's, as yet nothing to review. We look forward to considering this matter further and fully, when we have received the legal opinion commissioned by Fenland District Council.

Supplementary Question from Fenland District Councillor Lucie Foice-Beard:

Thank you. So just to clarify then, you are still pretty much committed to doing everything in your power to support Fenland District Council with regards to the incinerator?

Response from the Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, Councillor Lorna Dupré:

Thank you very much. I should have read the first half of my response and then the second half separately, shouldn't I?

Right ok, what I have said, and I will repeat this perhaps more slowly because I had to rush through what I was saying. Once we have received from Fenland District Council, the response from their legal counsel as to whether there is a reasonable prospect of judicial review being successful, we will then be able to be in a position to consider what your legal counsel has said and then to respond accordingly. But, until we have received that information and that advice from your legal counsel, there really is not much we can do. Since the decision was made by the Secretary of State, officers across all of the host authorities, which includes Fenland District Council, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, have worked in the collaborative manner to ensure that the decision and text on all the council webpages and other places is up to date and consistent. The suggestion that this Council has done anything other than cooperate positively, with Fenland District Council, in this matter is entirely without foundation and it is a distraction from what should be our shared endeavour of supporting the residents of Wisbech in this difficult situation, that remains our position. So, we will wait to hear from Fenland District Council as soon as they have heard from their legal counsel. Thank you.

2. Question from Ms Annabel Sykes to the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett.

My question is about East West Rail, which says on its website that it is passionate about hearing what local representatives and their communities think about it and its project. Last year, as you all know, it published its root update documents. At a 14th June meeting of the East West Rail Mainline Partnership, the County Council is a member of that, the Chair asked how EWR would be handling representations made between then and the beginning of the public consultation, which is due to start later this year. EWR held a series of drop-ins to give residents an opportunity to ask questions, including four in Cambridgeshire. To remind you, some residents of villages in South Cambridgeshire will be severely impacted by EWR and will derive no benefit from it. An FOI shows that EWR did not keep notes of the questions asked at any of these drop-in meetings. Would the County Council please raise this formally with EWR, both directly and at tomorrow's meeting of the Strategic Board of the East West Mainline Partnership and take such other action as it sees fit. Please would the County Council also write to EWR in relation to the forthcoming statutory consultation and ask them to include comprehensive supporting material, such as: photo montages, elevation and land use maps, details of road rerouting, bridleways, highways etc, anticipated disruption to all existing rail services and location and approximate size of construction compounds, plus road closures and diversions.

Response from the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

Thank you very much for your question, Ms Sykes. It was disappointing to hear that East West Rail Company did not keep notes of the questions asked at drop-in meetings. Officers working on the Council's position in relation to the East West Rail Company's proposals will formally raise the issue and reiterate the importance of records being kept of questions raised at events and of East West Rail Company's response to them. Officers will also reiterate the importance of records being kept of all engagement/ drop-in sessions throughout the statutory consultation when it takes place. In Cambridgeshire County Council's ongoing discussions on East West Rail, officers have consistently requested that East West Rail Company provide as much information as possible as part of stage one of the statutory consultation and to make sure that the information is pitched at the right level. This includes providing plans which are accessible and clear to the public as well as the more detailed drawings and information that the Council and other stakeholders will need to assess the proposals and its local impacts in detail. In addition, as part of Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory response to the statement of community consultation with East West Rail, the Council will continue to advocate for East West Rail to provide as much supporting material as possible as part of their statutory consultations. The leader of the Council has, in recent correspondence with the Chief Executive of the East West Rail Company, raised the issue of the upcoming consultations needing to be inclusive and it must present robust and clear information to the public. Thank you.

Supplementary question from Ms Annabel Sykes:

East West Rail has, in the last week or so, started sending out land interest questionnaires. It gave little or no notice to the local representative groups of its intention to do so and very little information. They are causing consternation, two examples: a man in Fulbourn has received one and in other places obviously affected, one house in a road has received one and its neighbours haven't. Two things, please will the County Council publish a map showing which of its land it has received an LIQ from East West Rail in respect of, and secondly, will it ask East West Rail for a map of Cambridgeshire showing where the LIQs have been sent to and ideally distinguishing between those which relate to construction and those which relate to operation of the railway and so are just about noise.

Response from the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Beckett:

Thank you very much, Ms Sykes. Unfortunately, I don't have any more information on that at this point. I am very happy to take it away though and look into what's possible and what the Council has been asked and whether it would be possible to generate that request, very happy to take that away.

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Item 5 – Petitions

Text of the petition titled 'Disband the GCP and move it's responsibilities and delegated powers to the control of the Mayoral Combined Authority' containing 258 signatures

Petition Overview:

"The County Council works with the government and partners to disband the GCP and move it's responsibilities and delegated powers to the control of the Mayoral Combined Authority, whilst ringfencing the £40m a year it now receives, specifically to the existing geography of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

We, the undersigned, believe the GCP have lost all credibility with the residents they are supposed to represent.

We have seen too much money wasted on failed or poorly managed schemes such as:

Briefly:

- the East Road "wands"
- the Dutch roundabout
- the Congestion Charge failure, nearly £5m
- following above, a proposed ULEZ
- Milton Road
- Histon Road
- illegal footpaths
- "smart" traffic lights that are creating hold ups
- Mill Road Bridge closure (on hold following legal challenge)
- cycling schemes' failures
- bus improvements' failures.

Currently, there is too much duplication and too many failures costing too much money.

Consultation results and brilliant suggestions have been ignored.

The Mill Road Bridge closure decision resulted in a costly legal challenge.

Residents within and outside the GCP area were failed by this unelected body by the outright refusal by the GCP assembly and board to debate the contributions of more than 24,000 residents' responses to their own consultation.

Residents of South Cambridgeshire were let down by the GCP abandoning plans for a Foxton travel hub and segregated CSET, but not pursuing the improvements now available.

They sought to destroy a historic orchard whilst refusing to examine alternative proposals. After the failure of the STZ, they let residents of the city down by then hastily pursuing a new war against private motorists.

Proposals include restricting freedom of movement with the introduction of gate controls across the city, preparing the groundwork for an unnecessary new ULEZ Tax by seeking to redefine air quality requirements.

The GCP and the CPCA share common aims but have duplicated bureaucracy that can be slimmed down.

Duplicated and conflicted decision making prevents the public from uniting behind one unified solution.

By agreeing to disband the GCP, moving it's responsibilities into the CPCA, the savings made could be transferred to public transport improvements.

Please help deliver a better and more coherent future by signing this petition.”

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Written Questions under Council Procedure Rule 9.2

1. Question from Councillor Simon Bywater

As a concerned corporate parent and mentor of our care leavers, I am reaching out to inquire about the steps taken by the Children and Young People's Committee under your leadership over the past three years. Specifically, I am interested in understanding the efforts made to ensure accountability among senior officers in the management of children's services.

Could you kindly provide insight into the following:

1. What actions have been taken by the committee to hold senior officers accountable for their responsibilities in managing children's services?
2. How many Chair/Vice Chair meetings have occurred to challenge officers regarding their performance and adherence to best practices? Are there any minutes to corroborate these.
3. In what ways have you encouraged officers to streamline casework and reduce the number of children entering the care system?
4. Given the decrease in the number of annual CYP committee meetings, what strategies has the committee implemented to address this decline and ensure robust oversight of children's services?

Your responses to these inquiries would greatly contribute to fostering transparency and trust within the community regarding the management of crucial services for our children and young people.

Response from Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair of Children and Young People Committee

1. What actions have been taken by the committee to hold senior officers accountable for their responsibilities in managing children's services?

The Committee, as do all Elected Members as Corporate Parents, have a key role and responsibility in providing oversight, scrutiny and seeking assurance from officers that arrangements within Children, Education and Families are being effectively discharged.

The Committee has a cycle of well-planned meetings, with agendas and reports being published well in advance, enabling all Councillors to raise issues, not only those who are members of the Committee. Given the importance of the role of the Children and Young People Committee, there are a range of standing items and frequent reporting on issues such as Children's Social Care and Education data and performance reports and the regular scrutiny of the Directorate Risk Register, elements of which are reflected appropriately in the Corporate Risk Register, which is subject to additional scrutiny by the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee.

In addition to the formal meetings of the committee, which is also well supported by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee, there are an extensive range of performance, governance and improvement meetings which involves the Chair, Vice Chair and other members of the Committee, including Opposition Spokes, as appropriate. These arrangements include:

- the Children's Services Improvement Board;
- the Education Achievement Board;
- the SEND Improvement Board;
- the Children's Safeguarding Board;
- Childrens Service Performance Management; and,
- the Virtual School Management Board.

Leading upon senior officer accountability is not solely the responsibility of the Children and Young People Committee. The Council has a clear officer leadership structure, whereby the Chief Executive and through him the Executive Director for Children, Education and Families as the Council's Statutory Director of Children's Services is both held to account for and holds to account and scrutinises the work of the Children, Education and Families Directorate.

2. How many Chair/Vice Chair meetings have occurred to challenge officers regarding their performance and adherence to best practices? Are there any minutes to corroborate these.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee meet with the Executive Director for Children, Education and Families informally on a weekly basis.

Cross Party Spokes meetings also occur regularly for the Children and Young People Committee.

As previously mentioned, there are a range of formal governance meetings held which involve formal records and decisions involving elected members, not only the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

The Committee Chair also meets frequently with individual Service Directors and Assistant Directors within Children, Education and Families on an informal basis.

Members are also reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and approved scheme of delegation and management structure, the responsibility for the management of officer performance is a matter for the Chief Executive and through him the Executive Directors. Service performance and delivery is appropriately and properly scrutinised through Committees and governance groups, but individual officer performance is not managed by elected members directly.

3. In what ways have you encouraged officers to streamline casework and reduce the number of children entering the care system?

Cambridgeshire County Council has the second lowest number of children in its care in the Eastern Region. This figure is 12.8/10,000 compared with a regional figure of 17/10,000.

The Children and Young People Committee's approved and independently chaired Children's Improvement Board and the new directorate leadership team within Children, Education and Families is driving forward improved outcomes for children and young people and ensuring they can remain at home wherever it is safe to do so. Children enter

the care system only when it is right and necessary to keep them safe and prevent significant harm.

In addition, given the well managed cessation of legacy shared service arrangements with a neighbouring authority, the leadership capacity and capability within Children, Education and Families has been strengthened to ensure that officers are also driving improvement and ensuring focus and rigour, as well as supporting our workforce.

4. Given the decrease in the number of annual CYP committee meetings, what strategies has the committee implemented to address this decline and ensure robust oversight of children's services?

As clarified in earlier responses, the Children and Young People Committee is only one part of an overall range of governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements that exist to both support and challenge the work of Children, Education and Families.

In particular, although referenced previously in these responses, the Committee decision during 2023 to create an independently chaired Children's Improvement Board, provides for much greater oversight of work in these areas.