

County Council – Minutes

Please note a video recording of the meeting can be viewed at the following link: [Full Council](#)

Date: 17 October 2023

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 3:50 p.m.

Present:

Councillors:

Sebastian Kindersley (Chair)

David Ambrose Smith

Michael Atkins

Henry Batchelor

Alex Beckett

Mike Black

Chris Boden

Anna Bradnam

Alex Bulat

Simon Bywater

David Connor

Steve Corney

Adela Costello

Piers Coutts

Steve Criswell

Claire Daunton

Lorna Dupré

Stephen Ferguson

Jan French

Ryan Fuller

Nick Gay

Mark Goldsack

Bryony Goodliffe

Neil Gough

John Gowing

Ros Hathorn

Anne Hay

Mark Howell

Richard Howitt

Samantha Hoy

Bill Hunt

Maria King

Simon King

Peter McDonald

Elisa Meschini

Brian Milnes

Edna Murphy

Lucy Nethsingha

Keith Prentice

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 were received from Councillors Gerri Bird (Vice-Chair), Ken Billington, Steve Count, Doug Dew, Ian Gardener, Jonas King, Mac McGuire.

163. Minutes – 18 July 2023 and Motions Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The motions log was noted.

164. Chair's Announcements

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

Councillors observed a minute silence in memory of former councillor, Dr Derek Nicholls, and member of staff Rochelle van-Croom.

165. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

166. Public Question Time

The Chair reported that seven public questions had been received from members of the public, as set out at Appendix B. He had exercised his discretion to accept an additional three eligible questions submitted before the deadline, as it served the public interest to do so.

167. Petitions

The Chair reported that one petition had been received from members of the public, as set out at Appendix C.

168. Item for Determination from Adults and Health Committee

Ombudsman Report on Prescribing in Drug and Alcohol Services

It was moved by the Chair of the Adults and Health Committee, Councillor Howitt, and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Van de Ven, that the recommendation from the Adults and Health Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

Note the report.

169. Health and Wellbeing Board / Integrated Care Partnership Annual Report 2022-23

It was moved by the Council's lead member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Van de Ven, and seconded by the Council's other representative on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board, Councillor Howitt, that the recommendation from the Adults and Health Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

Review and comment on the Annual Report of the Health and Wellbeing Board / Integrated Care Partnership for 2022-23.

170. Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendations – Proposed Changes to the Constitution

It was moved by the Vice-Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Kindersley, and seconded by Councillor Dupré that the recommendations from the

Constitution and Ethics Committee, as set out in the report on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

Approve the following changes to the Constitution, as set out in Section 2 of the report:

- a) Clarification on the consultation process for decisions delegated to officers.
- b) Additional provision for local members participating in committee meetings.
- c) Restrictions on public questions or petitions that have been put in the past six months.
- d) Removal of references to named social media companies.
- e) Amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Assets and Procurement Committee.
- f) Changes to the media protocol.
- g) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary or incidental to implement the changes to the Constitution detailed in this report.

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

It was moved by the Chair of Council, seconded by Councillor Ferguson and resolved unanimously by affirmation to approve the allocation of seats and substitutes on the Cambridge Joint Area Committee to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, as set out in the report.

172. Appointments to Outside Organisations

It was moved by the Chair of Council, seconded by Councillor Ferguson and resolved unanimously by affirmation to appoint Councillor Bradnam as the Council's representative, and Councillor Atkins as the substitute representative, on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

173. Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10

Five motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

a) Motion from Councillor Steve Count

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Goldsack and seconded by Councillor Hay:

Core Purpose: To help bring together speedily those able to decide on how to proceed to a new transport solution, not dependent on revenue derived from road charging.

The Council notes that:

- the Sustainable Travel Zone, which included an element of road charging often referred to as a congestion charge, is not being progressed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP).
- the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has not been able to progress the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, proposed by the Mayor, which included road charging.
- some future plans at the GCP and the CPCA are now stalled due to having insufficient revenue to proceed.
- the GCP and CPCA have some overlap in desired outcomes, and geography but separate governance, funding, and prioritisation.
- there is no plan B at the GCP or the CPCA for how to proceed with a short term and a longer term integrated and comprehensive transport solution, without the injection of the revenue previously assumed to come from road charging.
- significant time, money and resource has been expended by the GCP and the CPCA, without achieving significant progress to a transport solution to current and predicted requirements.
- Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council as both the current highways authorities and previous transport authorities, have the skills, expertise, and some necessary powers to examine and deliver many transport solutions that could be proposed.

The Council agrees that:

- the current situation is unsustainable.
- this situation is deficient for the daily needs of our residents, and harmful to the confidence, investment decisions and growth of businesses as well as damaging to the confidence necessary in Government to secure any further funding.
- short-term improvements have become increasingly necessary, due to time spent without progress to a long-term integrated solution.
- a long-term sustainable solution also remains a key requirement as an outcome.

The Council therefore asks:

- the Chief Executive to invite the Mayor of the CPCA and political leaders of both strategic and all five second tier authorities, together with the Chief Executives of their organisations, and the Chief Executive of the GCP, as well as the chair of the CPCA business board, to an initial meeting to discuss how to arrive at potential solutions that do not rely on any element of road charging.

- the leaders of the Joint Administration at Cambridgeshire County Council to consider whether any further influential decision makers should be invited.

Under Rule 15.5 of the Council Procedure Rules, more than fourteen members requested a recorded vote on this matter.

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

[Voting pattern (recorded vote set out in Appendix D): Conservatives and 1 Independent in favour; Liberal Democrats, Labour and 3 Independents against]

b) Motion from Councillor Alan Sharp

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Sharp and seconded by Councillor Tierney:

Core purpose: To ensure the County Council's current reported interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not perpetuate a war against the private motorist and damage the wider economy.

This Council notes that:

- Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing County in Great Britain with the ability of Cambridge and its surrounding areas to innovate and deliver growth for the economy recognised by Government in financial terms.
- the City Deal, now the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) secured deals worth £500m and £770m, from central Government under previous Conservative led administrations, to primarily deliver improvements in infrastructure and growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- the GCP and the CPCA were awarded transport infrastructure funding required to facilitate existing and predicted growth.
- Cambridgeshire County Council, as the highways authority, also has various duties and responsibilities set out in the Highways Act 1980, with due regard to the NPPF.
- in some areas the County Council is using 'Monitor and Manage' and trip budget principles. These may be appropriate in some areas (i.e., large new town/employment developments in congested urban settings).
- 'Monitor and Manage', looks at the available highway capacity and limits the number of car trips that can be accommodated.
- there are some development locations/forms where car use will remain key to the success of the development. The County should not seek to impose restrictive measures (where networks capacity allows or can be provided through planning obligation) if this would undermine the success of the development.

- some officers had reported that the County Council had recently moved from predict and provide on a blanket countywide basis to 'Monitor and Manage'.

This Council expresses concern that:

- the Sustainable Travel Zone proposed at the GCP, and the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan proposed by the Mayor of the CPCA, appeared to be a war against the private motorist, causing congestion and creating a massive negative effect on businesses.
- if monitor and manage is the only solution imposed, developments, residential and commercial, could be built with an inbuilt flaw inherent at the outset, causing them to fail.

The Council therefore resolves to ask:

- that a report be prepared for Highways and Transport Committee for approval, setting out guidance on how growth will be facilitated, and where trip budgets and other restrictive measures will and will not be applied to new developments.
- that officers are trained in the correct application of this guidance.
- that this new guidance be published and made available to update developers from previous advice given.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour; Liberal Democrats, Labour and 3 Independents against; 1 Independent abstained]

c) Motion from Councillor Steve Criswell

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Criswell and seconded by Councillor Goldsack. The motion included alterations from the version included on the agenda, which were proposed by Councillor Beckett, accepted by Councillor Criswell, and agreed by the meeting without discussion (additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough]):

Core purpose: For the Council to embark on an immediate multi-point plan of action, to address the poor and failing condition of peat soil affected roads in Cambridgeshire.

This Council recognises that the condition of peat soil affected roads across parts of rural Cambridgeshire is a serious safety issue and that doing nothing and allowing delay is not an option.

This Council therefore welcomes the significant work carried out to date to understand the scale of the problem, identify the roads in question, draw up short term measures to manage the problem where possible, and engage neighbouring councils in joint discussions with the Department for Transport about the need for the Government to fund the very large sums required to rebuild these roads.

The Council ~~therefore~~ **further** resolves to ask the Highways and Transport Committee to prepare a clear plan for publication, ~~this calendar year~~ **following consultation with parish councils which is already in place**, detailing the delivery of:

- emergency repair work to immediately identify and correct high-risk faults, particularly near waterways and steep banks, **where this can be done within budgets accessible by the Council.**
- **the** short-term road safety measures **already identified** to reduce the risk of road accidents **as and when appropriate**. These could include the temporary lowering of speed limits or introduction of weight restrictions.
- a medium-term programme, **dependent on Government funding**, to identify and systematically rebuild the worst sections of road that residents and businesses rely on to safely travel every day.
- the estimated ~~cost and forward plan for the~~ capital investment required to undertake this essential work **and forward plan to lobby Government to secure the necessary funding.**

Following discussion, the altered motion was carried unanimously by affirmation.

d) Motion from Councillor Bill Hunt

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Hunt and seconded by Councillor Dupré. The motion included alterations from the version included on the agenda, which were proposed by Councillor Dupré, accepted by Councillor Hunt, and agreed by the meeting without discussion (additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough):

The Council notes that:

- the A1421 runs from Haddenham crossroads to Witcham Toll which is a distance of about 2.48 miles. This short A road links the A1123 at Haddenham to Witcham Toll which is on the A142.
- the villages of Wicken, Stretham, Wilburton and Haddenham suffer from vehicles (some Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs)) "rat-running" from Stretham to Witcham Toll to avoid the congestion on A10 and A142 at Ely. **The A1421 is also on the Council's advisory freight route network and HCVs are thus encouraged to use this unsuitable road.**
- the parish councils along the A1123 and A1421 are supportive of any moves by this Council to reduce volume and speed of traffic through their villages.
- parked vehicles have been hit, houses have been damaged and parents are often forced to drive their children to school (and other activities) because of safety worries. The A1421 starts in Haddenham and Station Road is steep downhill with a very narrow and unsafe foot path. It is not uncommon ~~from~~ **for** large vehicles to get "wedged" as they join Station Road in opposite directions. The footpath actually crosses Station Road at its most dangerous point half way down the hill. **A new residential development on the A1421 at an already dangerous junction will add to the problem.**

- **as part of the council Vision Zero project all A roads in the county will be assessed and graded for safety via the International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP) system.**
- over the last 20 years, parish councils have worked with District and County Councillors to introduce crossing points, new speed restrictions, illuminated signs, Speedwatch action groups etc. Working from home has helped but the need for more volume/speed reduction measures remains.
- a motion to re-classify the A1421 and A1123 from "A" to a "B" was passed in December 2020. The new administration rescinded this motion in 2021 despite all the relevant parish councils supporting the move, **because no evidence was presented that the reclassification would achieve the desired outcomes.**
- **reclassifying the A1421 this proposed motion would have minimum incur recurring cost in lost maintenance funding.** It is believed **however that if the move were to result in reduced traffic would reduce wear and then this cost might represent worthwhile expenditure.**
- ~~the re-classification of the A1421 would be noted by Sat Nav systems and a reduction of Stretham to Witcham Toll "rat runners" would logically follow.~~
- residents rely on their elected Councillors to speak up for them and the case of making the roads safer and the villagers more pleasant is a constant desire.

This Council therefore resolves to ask:

- **recognise the effect that high traffic levels have on the built up areas of our villages, towns and cities across the county and work to reduce it wherever possible.**
- **accelerate the IRAP safety analysis of the A1421 and include it in the first tranche.**
- **ask the Executive Director for Place and Sustainability to present a report to the next a future meeting of Highways and Transport Committee to pursue which evaluates options to reduce traffic and traffic speeds, improve road safety, and increase options for active travel on the A1421 including, but not limited to, the reclassification of the A1421 from "A" to "B".**

Following discussion, the motion was carried unanimously by affirmation.

e) Motion from Councillor Chris Boden

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Boden and seconded by Councillor Tierney:

Core Purpose: To draw attention to and reverse this Council's decision to halt weedkilling under all but the most extreme circumstances.

This Council notes the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independent Group as the Joint Administration voted at Council in February to remove cyclic weedkilling based on the following points in the business case:

- the delivery of a permanent saving of £125k a year.
- the trialling by the Highways and Transport Service, in partnership with Cambridge City Council, to cease cyclic weed clearing to reduce chemical use.
- the removal of only weeds causing an immediate safety hazard.
- implementation will require investment in community engagement to gain buy in from town and parish councils. This will need to take place in the first quarter of 23/24. Estimated of cost of engagement work is £40k in the first year.

This Council recognises the following:

- the findings of this pilot have not been reported to members generally or the Highways and Transport Committee.
- evidence shows that a failure to stop weed growth will lead to increased path and road hazards for users and create an ongoing cost growth for future repairs to the council's infrastructure.
- there has been no engagement with parishes and towns as outlined in the business case proposed to council.
- residents, parishes, and towns have directly and indirectly complained about the state of the roads, cycleways and pathways.
- the Joint Administration's decision to halt cyclic weedkilling should have taken place following the outcome of the pilot and community engagement was known.
- cycleways and pathways are less likely to be used for active travel, when overgrown with weeds.
- cycleways and pathways, in many areas, are unsuitable for active travel directly due to the decision by the Joint Administration to change the weedkilling policy.
- failure to spray weedkiller prior to laying new surfaces such as footway slurry is a costly mistake.
- failure to have a preventative approach has led to an explosion of locations of ragwort concentrations throughout the county, which is dangerous to members of the horse family.
- the decision the Joint Administration made that "Only weeds causing an immediate safety hazard would be removed" was a mistake.
- there is a prescribed list of weedkillers available that are safe to use by operatives, with appropriate health and safety measures in place.

This Council therefore recommends that:

- the Highways and Transport Committee receive a report at its next meeting to immediately reintroduce the practice of removing all weed growth from paths and roads to be resurfaced.
- the Highways and Transport Committee be asked to allocate sufficient resource to spray existing weeds in urban environments countywide.
- a factual statement on the actual biodegradable state of the products used be published to counter the incorrect perceptions of carcinogenic and dangerous and environmentally harmful products.
- City, District, Town and Parish councils and the public be informed that cyclic and preventative weedkilling will be reintroduced.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Shailer and seconded by Councillor Sanderson (additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough):

~~Core Purpose: To draw attention to and reverse this Council's decision to halt weedkilling under all but the most extreme circumstances.~~

This Council notes the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independent Group as the Joint Administration voted at Council in February to **initiate a trial removal of** ~~remove~~ cyclic weedkilling based on the following points in the business case:

- the delivery of a **potential** ~~permanent~~ saving of £125k a year.
- the trialling by the **Cambridgeshire** Highways and Transport Service, in partnership with Cambridge City Council, to cease cyclic weed **killing by chemical means** ~~clearing~~ to reduce chemical use.
- the removal of only **noxious weeds**, weeds causing **a nuisance or an immediate safety hazard or as part of site preparation before works are carried out.**
- implementation will require investment in community engagement to gain buy in from town and parish councils. This will need to take place in the first quarter of 23/24. Estimated of cost of engagement work is £40k in the first year.

This Council recognises the following:

- ~~—the findings of this pilot have not been reported to members generally or the Highways and Transport Committee.~~
- ~~—evidence shows that a failure to stop weed growth will lead to increased path and road hazards for users and create an ongoing cost growth for future repairs to the council's infrastructure.~~
- ~~—there has been no engagement with parishes and towns as outlined in the business case proposed to council.~~

- ~~— residents, parishes, and towns have directly and indirectly complained about the state of the roads, cycleways and pathways.~~
- ~~— the Joint Administration’s decision to halt cyclic weedkilling should have taken place following the outcome of the pilot and community engagement was known.~~
- ~~— cycleways and pathways are less likely to be used for active travel, when overgrown with weeds.~~
- ~~— cycleways and pathways, in many areas, are unsuitable for active travel directly due to the decision by the Joint Administration to change the weedkilling policy.~~
- ~~— failure to spray weedkiller prior to laying new surfaces such as footway slurry is a costly mistake.~~
- ~~— failure to have a preventative approach has led to an explosion of locations of ragwort concentrations throughout the county, which is dangerous to members of the horse family.~~
- ~~— the decision the Joint Administration made that “Only weeds causing an immediate safety hazard would be removed” was a mistake.~~
- ~~— there is a prescribed list of weedkillers available that are safe to use by operatives, with appropriate health and safety measures in place.~~
- **while there is a prescribed list of weedkillers available that are safe to use by operatives, with appropriate health and safety measures in place, it is widely recognised that even weedkillers which biodegrade in the earth can have a devastating impact on pollinating insects.**
- **the findings of the trial have highlighted concerns from residents and parish councils. These are due to be compiled into a report going to the January Highways and Transport Committee, where a decision on this council’s long term weedkilling policy will be made.**
- **combined with this ad-hoc feedback, the council has started a broad engagement campaign with towns and parishes and sent out a survey to gather feedback on the trial approach.**
- **a report on the effects of the new weed policy is due to come to the Highways and Transport Committee on the 23rd January 2024.**

This Council therefore recommends that:

- **the Highways and Transport Committee receive a report at its next January meeting to ~~will~~ **consider whether to** immediately reintroduce the practice of removing all weed growth from paths and roads to be resurfaced **alongside other options.****
- **the report which is due to come to the Highways and Transport Committee in January should also be shared with all members, and a suitable report be shared with all parish and town councils who have contacted the Council to express their concerns.**

- ~~— the Highways and Transport Committee be asked to allocate sufficient resource to spray existing weeds in urban environments countywide.~~
- **the Strategy and Resources and Performance Committee be asked to allocate sufficient resource to ensure an appropriate spraying regime is in place to manage weeds in an effective way in the long term.**
- a factual statement on the actual biodegradable state of the products used, **and their impact on pollinating insects** be published to ~~counter the incorrect perceptions of carcinogenic and dangerous and environmentally harmful products~~ **ensure discussion of this issue is based on reliable evidence.**
- City, District, Town and Parish councils and the public be informed that cyclic and preventative weedkilling will be reintroduced **wherever appropriate.**

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

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

Following further discussion, on being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried by a majority.

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents in favour; 17 Conservatives against; 2 Conservatives abstained.]

174. Questions

- (a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Council Procedure Rule 9.1)

One question was submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.1 of the Council's Constitution, attached at Appendix E.

- (b) Questions on Fire Authority Issues

No questions were submitted on Fire Authority Issues.

- (c) Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 9.2)

No questions were submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2 of the Council's Constitution.

County Council – 17th October 2023

Chair's Announcements

People

Former County Councillor Dr Derek Nicholls

It is with regret that the Chair reports the death of former County Councillor Dr Derek Nicholls, who represented the Shelford and Chesterton Divisions on behalf of the Liberal Democrat party from 1984 to 1993. The Council's thoughts are with his family and friends at this very sad time.

Rochelle Van-Croom

It is with deep regret that the Chair reports the recent death of Rochelle van-Croom.

Rochelle was a much loved and respected Lead Support worker working within our Prevention & Early Intervention Service across Ely and Cambridgeshire. Rochelle loved her role and was truly passionate about delivering support services to those in need and made positive impacts to the lives of those she supported within her role.

Rochelle will be sadly missed by her friends and colleagues in the Service, many of whom she supported within her role, often going above and beyond to make a real difference. The Council's thoughts are with her family, friends, and colleagues at this very sad time.

Sue Procter, Service Director for Highways and Transport

Sue Procter, Service Director for Highways and Transport retired at the end of August. Sue has been an integral part in supporting the Council's aim to improve transport and connectivity for all residents in Cambridgeshire.

David Parcell, Senior Finance Business Partner, and Denise Parcell, Senior Admin and Finance Officer

The Council records with gratitude the retirement of David Parcell in September, from his role as Senior Finance Business Partner, after 42 years dedicated service to the Council. David has made an immense contribution to public financial management in Cambridgeshire during his long tenure. His wife Denise Parcell, also retired in September after 39 years dedicated service to the Council, most recently supporting Highways and Transport. David and Denise share a combined 81 years at the County Council, and their professionalism, expertise and friendship will be missed by colleagues. The Council wishes them a happy retirement.

Awards

Libraries of Sanctuary status

Libraries throughout Cambridgeshire have received Libraries of Sanctuary status. This national award celebrates libraries that work hard to demonstrate hospitality, solidarity and welcome to new arrivals in the area. The title was awarded by City of Sanctuary UK, a nationally coordinated

network of organisations and services, including councils, universities, theatres and libraries that welcome and support refugees and people seeking asylum. Cambridgeshire has a strong heritage of supporting those in need, with public libraries playing an important role in welcoming refugees, migrants, and other new arrivals into our communities.

The award follows Cambridgeshire Libraries' May 2022 pledge to work towards the City of Sanctuary charter locally. This saw Cambridgeshire Libraries working across staff, volunteers and library users to learn what it means to be seeking sanctuary; and be actively involved in awareness raising about the issues of refugees and displaced people. Libraries have also taken positive action to ensure a culture of hospitality which means refugees and all those seeking sanctuary are welcomed, supported and included throughout library resources, events and learning opportunities hosted at Cambridgeshire Libraries.

Alongside this work, the service has also shared information and news about the positive contribution refugees make to our society, as part of Cambridgeshire's wider commitment to openness, welcome and tolerance and our drive to become a fairer and more caring County.

Anglia Ruskin University shortlisted for the University of the Year award

The Chair congratulates Anglia Ruskin University on being shortlisted for the University of the Year award in this year's *Times Higher Education* (THE) Awards, widely known as the Oscars of the UK university sector. It is also shortlisted for the Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community award (for the creation of ARU Peterborough) and Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion award (for our SHoKE project).

The awards honour "exceptional performance during the 2021-22 academic year", a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was still causing disruption, and Anglia Ruskin University's success in delivering high-impact projects during this period has been recognised by the judges.

Anglia Ruskin University is dedicated to serving the region and the communities in which it is based. Its significant achievements in 2021-22 included the successful launch of ARU Peterborough, a new university designed from the ground up to meet the needs of local students, employers, and the regional economy.

In May 2022 its progress in growing the range, quality and impact of its research was recognised by its best ever ranking in the Research Excellence Framework 2021, with every subject area including research rated as 'world-leading'. This followed the award of The Queen's Anniversary Prize, which acknowledged the globally important work of ARU's Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research.

In the *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings 2022, it was ranked 1st in the UK and 20th globally for health and wellbeing. Its submission also highlighted the interdisciplinary Ruskin Modules and the Students at the Heart of Knowledge Exchange initiative, which in 2021-22 saw over 1,000 students tackle 60 complex challenges facing society, each set by local public sector partners. A fantastic achievement during a difficult year.

It also opened the UK's first Samaritans university hub on our Cambridge campus, which sees fully trained student and staff volunteers deliver support to the public, and ARU's Chelmsford campus hosted the most sustainable British Science Festival ever staged, attracting thousands of visitors.

It also continued to serve and enrich the region by being the largest university provider of initial police education and the largest provider of health and social work graduates in the UK (Graduate Outcomes Survey 2021).

This recognition clearly demonstrates how it delivers on its mission to serve the region and transform lives through innovative, inclusive and entrepreneurial education and research.

Messages

Visit of His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester to Lower Valley Farm, Fulbourn

The Chair was part of the dignitary line up on 19 July when His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester visited Lower Valley Farm in Fulbourn.

Historic Counties Flag Raising at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the Historic Counties Flag and said a few words at New Shire Hall alongside Deputy Lieutenant Mr Chris Parkhouse, Dr Stephen Moir and other Cambridgeshire County Council Colleagues. The aim of Historic County Flags Day is to have as many county flags flying across Great Britain as possible on the same day, to mark the nation's historic counties.

Annual 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.

Gateway to India – special Opening Event

The Chair attended Mill Road, Cambridge where the newly created carved stone arch, Gateway to India project was unveiled. It is the first Gateway to India within the UK and the project has seen people of different cultures, religions and political affiliations all come together.

Merchant Navy and Emergency Service Flag Raising at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the Merchant Navy and Emergency Service Flags and said a few words at New Shire Hall alongside Deputy Lieutenant Mr James Buxton FRICS, Councillor Stephen Ferguson, Dr Stephen Moir and other Cambridgeshire County Council Colleagues.

Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal opened the new Magpas Air Ambulance base

The Chair was part of the dignitary line up on 12th September when Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal opened the new Magpas Air Ambulance base in Alconbury

Mayor of Ramsey's Civic Church Service

The Chair attended the Mayor of Ramsey's Civic Church Service at St Thomas A Becket Church in Ramsey.

Tree planting ceremony at Prestley Wood

The Chair spoke at the Tree Planting Ceremony at Prestley Wood to mark the new progress being made on the school.

Coneygear Room Naming and Freedom Presentation Event

The Chair attended the room naming ceremony at the Coneygear Centre where they honoured two former Mayors, Jim Lomax and Beryl Robertson and former Town Clerk, Ted Bocking

Institution and Induction of the Reverend Canon Jutta Brueck

The Chair attended the institution and induction of the Reverend Canon Jutta Brueck at Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge by the Right Reverend Dagmar Winter, Acting Bishop of Ely.

BBC Radio Cambridgeshire Make a Difference Awards

The Chair attended the BBC Radio Cambridgeshire Make a Difference Awards at Peterborough Cathedral, where people across the county were awarded for their care for their communities and inspiration to others.

Mayor of Whittlesey Civic Service

The Chair attended the Mayor of Whittlesey's Civic Service at St Andrew's Church in Whittlesey.

The High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire Justice Service

The Chair was welcomed by the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Dr Bharatkumar N Khetani, for his Justice Service at Peterborough Cathedral.

The British Racing School Summer Reception

The Vice Chair, Cllr Gerri Bird attended The British Racing School Summer Reception for a dinner celebrating 40 Years.

Team Mildenhall's 2023 New Mayors BBQ

The Vice Chair attended The New Mayors BBQ on 19 August with Team Mildenhall.

Public Question Time

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Councillor Stephen Thompson JP, Chair, Haddenham Parish Council	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>You'll see that there's been an altered motion later on in the agenda about a very unsafe road that we have in Haddenham. We've basically got a problem of HGVs short cutting through the village and driving on the pavements to pass each other when there are children walking to and from school. It's an appalling situation and we hope to improve it in some way, possibly with a downgrade, possibly with a weight limit, maybe even removing it from the advisory freight map or some other measures. They are our intentions and I see this as a really positive first step towards it and I hope that you can all vote for it unanimously.</p> <p>Just a couple of points of note. The road is very short, it's about 2.5 miles in length. It's one of the shortest A roads in the country. It should never have been an A road, it was once a B road. It's in very good condition so if you are ever considering the cost implications, if we cut out a lot of the short cutting lorries, it wouldn't need much maintenance at all. We've got full support from our MP, unanimous support from our parish council, support from Turners of Soham, who have agreed never to use that road through safety measures, and we have dozens of letters of support for the motion.</p> <p>Can I just thank Councillors Hunt and Dupré for their support and for working together, and I know I have to wrap this up into a question so I'll say that in a minute but I'd just like to show you this board. This is our hall of fame board, we have it on our website, and these are all the companies who have agreed through safety reasons not to use that road. So my point is there are alternatives that they're all using. So I'll just leave this on show, I'm sure you'll recognise these logos on here, there's some big ones.</p> <p>My question is do you have enough evidence now? I think there was a document circulated, hopefully you've all seen the photos; they are appalling. Do you have enough evidence to make this decision?</p>

	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Councillor Stephen Thompson JP, Chair, Haddenham Parish Council	<p>Thank you very much, Councillor Thompson, and thank you for the amazing work that you've been doing as a parish council to bring this to our attention.</p> <p>It's incredibly apparent to us the help that is needed on the road and the problems that it has. Having previously lived on a very, very busy C road, I'm also not 100% sure that downgrading it will have the effects that you want, but it is very clearly a road that needs help. You've probably also, I think, been aware that prior to this we had circulated some notes from officers about some of the interventions to be done and the state of the road. We do have a motion on this later on, that I believe there will be unanimity in looking at what it is. We obviously, with it being an A road as well, have a future safety that officers are coming up with, known as the IRAP standard. So I very much look forward to seeing that and seeing what comes out of it, and what we can do to help the A1421. So, in total, I don't believe that we necessarily have the evidence to support a downgrading of it but do definitely have evidence that work needs to be done on it and very much look forward to working with you and other members on seeing what can be done to help the road.</p>
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
2.	Ms Anne Miller, Carbon Neutral Cambridge	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>Thank you, I'm asking this question on behalf of Carbon Neutral Cambridge.</p> <p>We were very disappointed to hear the Prime Minister's announcement on 4 October that the Northern part of HS2 will be scrapped, but we were then pleased to hear that some of the funds may be diverted to enable the long delayed upgrade to Ely Junction.</p> <p>We very much support this project, because of the decarbonisation benefits of taking freight off the roads and onto rail (particularly if that rail line is electrified) and also the opportunity an upgraded junction gives to improve passenger services across our community. These, of course, are vital measures, both for the prosperity of our region, and to help avoid climate breakdown, and of course climate change is one of the underlying causes of the shocking state of Fen roads.</p> <p>So we would like to know what promises have actually been made about the funding for Ely junction, and what are the implications of those promises. For example, is there</p>

			<p>enough to actually do the work allowing for inflation? What are the possible timescales for starting and finishing the work? And in general, what is the County Council planning to do to accelerate progress on this important Ely junction upgrade?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	<p>Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee</p>	<p>Ms Anne Miller, Carbon Neutral Cambridge</p>	<p>Thank you, Ms Miller, and thank you very much for your question.</p> <p>I too very much support sustainable travel and was saddened to hear about the cuts to HS2. It is clear that we need to decarbonise our transport as much as possible if we are to reach our climate objectives and to stop the impending doom of climate change. I very much support the work needed to improve capacity through Ely and indeed earlier this year I attended a rail summit in Cambridge, and a Parliamentary reception in Westminster looking at how we could facilitate the improvements needed at Ely and also at Haughley. It really is vital that we get this work done and it could remove almost a hundred thousand lorries off our roads which I'm sure we would all be very thankful of.</p> <p>While we saw support for the Ely area capacity enhancements in the Prime Minister's speech in his party conference, we still await more details from government to understand the scope, timescales and costs. Unfortunately we don't have those details yet. We will continue discussions with government and Network Rail in this regards and will obviously update as and when that information becomes available.</p>
	Supplementary Question from:	Supplementary Question to:	Question:
	<p>Ms Anne Miller, Carbon Neutral Cambridge</p>	<p>Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee</p>	<p>Well, really, just that I'm very disappointed. Do you have any idea when you might expect to learn anything meaningful from the government about what they are promising, or is just another one pound gimmick?</p>

	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Ms Anne Miller, Carbon Neutral Cambridge	I'm afraid, Ms Miller, I would not like to hazard a guess as to when the government might get their act together and send us this information, but I hope it will be forthcoming very soon.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
3.	Mr James Reader	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>My 18-year-old daughter has been resident at Meldreth Manor/Orchard Manor the educational/residential care home since September 2021.</p> <p>As parents, my wife and I make the journey from Watford to Meldreth twice a week. Recently we have decided to venture outside the grounds and take our daughter for a walk in the community, pushing her wheelchair along the pavements of Meldreth's High Street.</p> <p>Despite our daughter weighing a tiny 32kilos, the journey with her wheelchair has proven 'dangerous' at best. Caring staff at Meldreth Manor confirm that they struggle even more with heavier residents and sometimes have to avoid walking away from their grounds altogether.</p> <p>The pot-hole equivalents and chronic camber towards the roadway are impossible to avoid when pushing our daughter's wheelchair along the High Street. With occasional pavement parking and cars driving within a foot of the kerb, which in places is nearly flush with the road, an accident is simply waiting to happen. Any wheelchair-user should be able to safely access the community and I raise a question on behalf of my daughter, who cannot talk or communicate with you directly, and of course all her fellow wheelchair users both at the home and living within the wider community, of course.</p> <p>I understand that in practice potholes on the roadway are given priority, both in terms of budget and immediate action. I put to you that wheelchair wheels on a pavement, that has only seen piecemeal repair over the past 20 years, presents an equivalent priority. Council funds surely need to be applied to re-lay the High Street pavement to remove pot</p>

			<p>holes and also lessen the camber so wheelchairs are not drawn towards the roadway and cars driving extremely close-by.</p> <p>I struggle to believe that this issue is of such long-standing, particularly in a community that hosts a school/home for wheelchair-bound children. The Council are sitting on a timebomb, waiting for a tragedy to happen, where a wheelchair gets dragged into the roadway and the user hit by an oncoming car, or a wheelchair topples and the fragile user falls to the ground. Surely...</p> <p>Chair – Mr Reader your time is up but I can assure you that we have all received a copy of the question which is - What plans have been made to prioritise repairs to the footway along High Street, Meldreth?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Mr James Reader	<p>Thank you, Mr Reader, and thank you very much for bringing this to our attention.</p> <p>Firstly, I really sympathise with the issues and across the country the condition of our footpaths is always a challenge.</p> <p>Maintenance on our carriageways is actually done by means of intervention criteria depending on the severity of defects. It's not actually fair to say that defects on the road are prioritised. We have different criteria in different areas. Defects on our footway will be fixed within either 36 hours, 21 days or 13 weeks depending on the severity of those issues and its safety risks.</p> <p>Melbourn footway is inspected every three months, with the last inspection taking place on the 4th of this month. This identified three defects and these are due to be repaired by the 25th, within twenty-one days. I should also note at the time we don't have any public reports on the footway at Melbourn but if any other members do want to report anything, please use our reporting website, as that helps us to look at places before inspections. Melbourn High Street is also on the longer-term programme for resurfacing. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, this might be three to five years but is in the programme for longer term work. At that time, we can look at whether the camber can be</p>

			<p>adjusted. However, unfortunately there are often then issues with kerb heights and drainage, so we will need to take that in to account.</p> <p>As an administration though, we very much do recognise the work that needs to be done, particularly for more vulnerable active travel users. We all know the consequences of a pothole to someone walking, cycling or wheeling can easily be incredibly serious or even life threatening. Chair, I was really saddened to see in the news this week about the death of a cyclist in Lanarkshire who died after hitting a crack in the road which the county council up there didn't fix for years because they didn't believe it was serious enough and didn't affect motorists. It is clear to me that we must consider active travel users and those walking cycling and wheeling and making sure roads are fixed for all our users.</p> <p>As an administration, we have commissioned a project to define a maintenance hierarchy for active travel users, reflecting on the fact that the location or type of a defect can have a significant impact on safety. I look forward to this coming to Highways and Transport and hopefully being adopted.</p> <p>Chair of Council interjected – I just want to clarify that you are referring to Meldreth rather than Melbourn.</p> <p>Sorry, Meldreth.</p>
	Supplementary Question from:	Supplementary Question to:	Question:
	Mr James Reader	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>Are you sure this data is with respect to Meldreth High Street and Meldreth pavement and not Melbourn? So that's extremely important to work out.</p> <p>I believe that there are plans to remedy the roadway along Meldreth High Street in the winter, and my question, the three lines of it ends looking at economies of scale potential, where actually were you to budget/find the funds to remedy the footpath, that this could all be done as one. Clearly the council needs to change its attitude, given that this is twenty years of intervention waiting to happen. So this issue is twenty years old, a generation old. So, again it would be very good to get some feedback on that please.</p>

	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Mr James Reader	Thank you, Mr Reader, I will very much clarify that it is Meldreth that we are talking about. If you would like to meet on site, I am very happy to meet you there with members of our maintenance team to go through the issues and look at how we can address those. So if you would like to do that, I'm very happy to meet you on site and discuss what we have there and what issues need addressing.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
4.	Mr Antony Carpen	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	<p>Following her resignation from Cambridge City Council, Councillor Sam Davies MBE wrote on her final blogpost the following:</p> <p>"it is more apparent than ever, without a major overhaul of local government structures, financing and powers, our council will struggle with relentless demands to maintain current levels of service and protect residents' quality of life."</p> <p>I'm sure that statement could easily apply to Cambridgeshire County Council. With the above statement, or that statement in mind, and also following the cross party launch of the Cambs Unitaries Campaign, and people can go to www.cambsunitaries.org.uk to see what it's all about, I ask the following question:</p> <p>Please could the County Council make a statement on what its policy is regarding any possible overhaul of local government structures and systems for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, in particular including what the Council understands as being the processes ministers require for prospective local areas to bid for permission or bid for support to undertake a possible restructure. Thank you.</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance	Mr Antony Carpen	<p>Hello Antony, thank you for your question.</p> <p>So the County Council does not have at this time have a formal policy on any potential reorganisation of local government structures and systems for Cambridgeshire and</p>

<p>and Leader of the Council</p>		<p>Peterborough. While I understand that there is a discussion about these issues going on in various groups, and indeed it will be debated at Cambridge City Council later this week, it is not something which has been addressed by any motions at the County Council for several years. I will personally be taking part in the debate at Cambridge City Council this week but it is important to be clear that will be in a personal capacity as a back bench member of Cambridge City Council and not in my capacity as Leader of this council. My views expressed there will be personal views and not the views of Cambridgeshire County Council.</p> <p>It is my understanding that there are two possible routes for local government reorganisation arising from either the Local Government Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 or the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.</p> <p>In the first case, the secretary of state for levelling up can invite or direct a local authority to make a reorganisation proposal under section 2 of the 2007 Act. Such directions or invitation can result in a type a, type b, or type c, or a combined proposal and I'll come back to explain those if I have time at the end and if you would like me to. In the recent past these mechanisms have been used for the reorganisation of local authorities in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset.</p> <p>The second option is that local authorities may themselves put together reorganisation proposals and submit these for the consideration by the secretary of state without being invited to. The secretary of state will then review these and may determine to pass the statutory instrument to govern the reorganisation.</p> <p>Here in Cambridgeshire we are not presently involved in discussions about either of the above mechanisms for local government reorganisation and given that no such discussions have started in any form, it is hard to see how any meaningful reorganisation proposals could come forward prior to a general election. As a result, my personal energy and the work of this County Council remains devoted to trying to ensure that our current.....</p> <p>Chair of Council stopped out of time</p>
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	Supplementary Question from:	Supplementary Question to:	Question:
	Mr Antony Carpen	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	<p>Thank you, Councillor. One of the things I've found, some of you may be aware that I've started organising some local workshops titled the Greater Cambridge Crash Course, where I'm basically booking out some local library space to enable local residents to work out how Cambridge and Cambridgeshire got to where we are, and I'm thinking should there be after the next general election anything around debating what the future structure of local government in Cambridgeshire could be. My big concern is that we lack the collective public understanding of the essentials of politics, civics and citizenship that is, for me, essential for underpinning that, and I think we saw that with the GCP consultations on the Sustainable Travel Zone. It was something that was addressed by Councillor Goodliffe at the recent East Area committee.....</p> <p>Chair of Council stopped out of time</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	Mr Antony Carpen	<p>I'll try and guess what the question the supplementary was, but I'm not sure whether I'll succeed. If not, we can pick it up afterwards, Antony.</p> <p>I think, if what you are talking about in your supplementary is the complexity of our current arrangements and the fact that many people within our area don't really understand quite how those arrangements arose or indeed who has responsibility for what in our local area, I have a great deal of sympathy for that view, and I'm very grateful to you for trying to help people to understand about those arrangements and about were decisions making lies and who has responsibility for those decisions.</p> <p>I think it is important to be clear that the Greater Cambridge Partnership, which is part of that has always been, intended to be and currently is a time limited organisation so that part of our complex and rich governance arrangements will eventually come to an end.</p> <p>The other part that's been reintroduced during my time as a County Councillor is the Combined Authority, and that is not intended to come to an end and will continue to have strategic transport responsibility going forward, which I think is an important thing for us in this organisation to recognise, and it is relatively clear that both the largest political parties</p>

			<p>seem to be continuing to support directly elected Mayors and Combined Authorities. So I think working with that organisation in the future is going to continue to be very important for us.</p> <p>What I had been going to say was that in the meantime within this organisation and my energy will go very much into making the partnerships that we have work effectively and making sure that we are providing the best value for money and the best services we can to residents in Cambridgeshire.</p>
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
5.	Ms Jenny Williams	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>Thank you very much. Yes, my name is Jenny Williams, and I'm here on behalf of Cambridge Parents for the Sustainable Travel Zone. So my question is.</p> <p>Given the failure of the GCP's Making Connections proposals to achieve the political support necessary to make progress, and given the County Council's ultimate responsibility for highways and transport across the county, will the County Council commit now to a timescale to bring forward revised proposals to urgently tackle congestion and air pollution in Cambridge and raise the money to fund the significant expansion into public transport that we so desperately need?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Ms Jenny Williams	<p>Thank you and, Jenny, thank you very much for your question.</p> <p>It saddens me the consensus was unable to be found within the GCP and unfortunately despite consensus not been found, the issues that we face are still very real. Traffic on our streets causes misery with fifty a year dying due to the effects of pollution every day. Over sixty people are still killed or seriously injured within the city by cars every year and 44% of our climate emissions still come from transport. That doesn't even consider the weeks our residents spend in misery sitting in their cars waiting for traffic to move.</p> <p>Our public transport system desperately needs large scale investment, with commercial operators still cutting services due to commercial viability. The lack of public transport has very real consequences on the life choices of many people and simply adds to the</p>

			<p>inequality inherent in our society. It limits people's access to education, health care, work and so many other things. None of this is right and large-scale reform is so rightly needed. Saying that, it is important the county council reflects on the most appropriate solutions to the transport challenges within Cambridgeshire. While the county council is indeed the Highways Authority, the Combined Authority is actually our transport provider.</p> <p>As a county council, we need to support more sustainable travel options and we continue to do so through the GCP's infrastructure programme, our active travel centre of excellence and our work within the CPCA to transform the bus network. Cambridge has the highest rates of cycling in the country. We need not to rest on our laurels though, but improve that and go to work in the rest of our county to achieve similar figures. We need to work together to find ways to free up our city streets and make them more appealing places to both live, work and also travel through.</p> <p>While the current GCP proposals haven't gained the necessary support, the status quo is clearly untenable. With the government and Micheal Gove announcing significant ambitions for growth in our area, we must be bold, brave and willing to make tough decisions and not simply use them as wedges used for political purposes. A paper will be brought to the December Highways and Transport Committee on strategic transport matters and we will have to see what comes of that.</p>
	Supplementary Question from:	Supplementary Question to:	Question:
	Ms Jenny Williams	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>Yes, I guess my follow up question would be:</p> <p>You mentioned it in your response that we are an area that has a lot of active travel already, and even in the Making Connections consultation there was a broad base support for improvements to the bus network and active travel improvements, but due to the lack of understanding among the public that aspect of the Making Connections proposals were sort of side lined or ignored or misunderstood, and the focus was mostly on just the fact of the congestion charge. So the actual sustainable travel zone and the support for better public transport and active transport/active travel improvements was not part of the debate, was not a significant part of the conversation that was going on. So, it would be good to know whether or not the council, the county council will be, in any</p>

			improvements in the future, be looking to lead that conversation about public transport and active travel rather than just being, you know, hijacked?
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Ms Jenny Williams	<p>Thank you, Ms Williams. Yes, I very much agree.</p> <p>We do see incredibly high rates of cycling within the city, but to me often we see cycling as a bolt on, and we've seen this previously within this county council that we have had cycling schemes and road schemes, whereas to me actually what we need to do is make sure all schemes are active travel schemes, all schemes work for everybody. That's part of what we are doing, as our centre of excellence is trying to make sure that when we look at road schemes, we consider them in the round not just prioritising them as either a car scheme or an active travel scheme. We very much need to make sure that these two modes of transport live in harmony together and I consider this part of everything we do.</p> <p>It is one of the things of the joint administration we have been very keen on, to raise the levels of walking, cycling and wheeling that we have across the county. I know some of our friends in Fenland will often say that people have to drive round there and yet we see the highest rates of walking in the entire county. We need to be looking at how we can get people out of their cars, and the key to doing that is to finding other means of transport so that they can still get around, be that walking, cycling, or wheeling or any other form that they have.</p> <p>So yes, it is incredibly important to me as the administration. Yes, we are looking at what can be done to prioritise and bring forward more active travel routes and making sure the maintenance is right for them so people feel that they are able to use them and making sure that our urban environment still feels safe to be able to use them. I know talking to people particularly around the city that there are certain times they don't feel safe being able to cycle on our roads, and we need to be addressing that were possible to make sure that everybody feels comfortable using our roads for whatever means they feel comfortable using and are able to use and is most appropriate to them. So thank you for your question, it is something we take very seriously.</p>

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
6.	Mrs Sarah Hughes, Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	<p>My question is on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance, an alliance of 31 organisations active in the areas of transport, environment and health.</p> <p>At the September meeting of the CPCA Board, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha spoke eloquently about how a lack of public transport and active travel facilities limits people's life chances and increases inequality. She spoke about how older people cannot access healthcare because there isn't a decent bus service, and then went on, stating her position as Chair of Skills to say that alternatives to driving are even more important for young people, who may not be able to have any choice about their future; all that's available to them is what's in their village, because they can't afford to drive. She said:</p> <p>"Driving is just unaffordable for an enormous number of people who are under 25 or 30, and by neglecting our public transport system, and not investing sufficiently in our active travel, we will be making sure that those young people do not have the opportunities that are available in other parts of our system... "</p> <p>However shortly after this meeting, political support for the Sustainable Travel Zone road charge collapsed. The Sustainable Travel Zone would have put in place a mechanism to fund a much-expanded bus service for the long-term and improve active travel into the future. The problem is not, therefore, understanding the importance of buses and active travel, but rather having the political will to do anything to fix the current problems.</p> <p>So the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance would like to ask when the County Council will take action to put in place schemes that will generate sufficient long-term funding for Cambridgeshire to have the bus service and active travel facilities it requires to ensure that everyone gets the same chances in life, and secondly what forms these schemes will take?</p>

	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	<p>Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Mrs Sarah Hughes, Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance</p>	<p>Thank you very much. I will respond to the actual question first and then come back to the political will element. I do want to say I completely stand by everything I said in that meeting. It is still 100% the case that all of those things are true.</p> <p>So the County Council continues to work closely with partners to transform the public transport offer in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire. This includes supporting the Combined Authority's network review, its bus strategy, and opportunities associated with the new BSIP funding. In September, the Combined Authority agreed to progress an independent audit of its business case for a reformed bus industry. The business case considers bus franchising and enhanced partnerships. The audit will then allow partners to consider the most appropriate way forward for the network and how local partners can best shape service patterns, ticketing, fares and quality of service. We continue to explore funding opportunities to unlock the changes we need to see and work continues with many partners. More work on that from a County Council perspective, as has already been said by Alex, will be coming to the December Highways and Transport Committee.</p> <p>Just to come back to the issue about the political will. In some respects, I recognise that that is the case that what we need to make sure we have is political will for a change in our transport system. The County Council works with many partners across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Combined Authority. We also have to work in a political environment that is in part set by national government, and one of the things that has changed significantly over the past year is the approach of national government towards road schemes and supporting active travel and public transport. It's changed in a variety of different ways but I think it is reasonable to reflect that there have been changes and that our own changes as a local partner have to respond to those, as well as to the changing narrative within our own area.</p>

	Supplementary Question from:	Supplementary Question to:	Question:
	Mrs Sarah Hughes, Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	Last month Stagecoach East MD, Darren Rowe, wrote in the Cambridge Independent - a very challenge does exist for our local transport network. Once a bus leaves the depot, the service punctuality is overwhelmingly reliant on the control of road management, which falls with Highways and the local authority. Our regions roads are congested leading to service cancellations and delays. Over the summer, the CSTA, the travel alliance interviewed over 300 bus users in Cambridge, Huntingdon and Ely. 51% of non-park and ride users in Cambridge and 44% across the county said their services were late or unreliable. So I'd like to ask when the County Council will take action to reduce the congestion in and around Cambridge, given that bus services will remain unreliable until congestion is reduced?
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	Mrs Sarah Hughes, Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance	Thank you. So again I completely recognise that picture you have painted and the pressures that the congestion within Cambridge and in other areas puts on bus services around Cambridgeshire. Those will be things that are addressed in the paper that comes to the Highways and Transport Committee but I would also like to say that those issues are also being discussed very actively with our partners and I have been involved in conversations relating to those aspects of the need to provide a more reliable bus service this week.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
7.	Ms Anna Williams, Camcycle [Mrs Sarah Hughes presenting]	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	Two years ago, the UK government made a legal commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels. How seriously is this council taking its part in achieving this commitment? There is zero mentions of the climate crisis in any of the papers or motions brought to this meeting, or acknowledgement that this matter is a key driver behind aspects of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, the proposals for a Sustainable Travel Zone in Cambridge, the move away from a Predict and Provide method (now rejected by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation) and the worsening state of peat soil affected roads in the county.

			<p>Acting now would bring a multitude of benefits to our region. For example, the council's net zero vision says that delivering net zero by 2045 would mean 'Our health will be better, and we will have easy access to sustainable, local transport and green space'. One of its strategic priorities is 'enabling and encouraging use of low-carbon transport'. Its action plan says the council will 'work in partnership with our strategic transport partners to ensure policy and new schemes promote the travel hierarchy and contribute to carbon reductions'.</p> <p>However, partnership working appears to have broken down at almost every level of transport strategy and the government's latest walking and cycling statistics show that cycling levels in Cambridgeshire are lower than they were 5 years ago. For example, in 2022 only 20.4% of residents cycled at least once a week, compared with 26.1% in 2017, a fall of 22%.</p> <p>Camcycle would therefore like to ask if the county's policies on carbon reduction from transport are little more than warm words? When will it take significant action on improving walking, cycling, and public transport in our region and give people in every district a choice of high-quality and sustainable modes of travel?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance and Leader of the Council	Ms Anna Williams, Camcycle [Mrs Sarah Hughes presenting]	<p>Thank you. The County Council takes its commitment to net zero very seriously. We recognise the significant role that our transport networks have to play in achieving our ambitions. Cambridgeshire has historically had high rates of cycling. However, rates of cycling in recent years have decreased partly as a result of Covid-19. When compared to 2013, 2020 saw large decreases in cycling rates likely linked to the two national lockdowns during that year, which led to a reduction in travel generally, for example for school, work and leisure. 2021 cycling volumes saw an increase from 2020 and were 9% above the 2013 volumes.</p> <p>However, partnership working has not stopped on cycling. We are very, very keen to continue with that. The County Council has established an active travel centre of excellence and is working closely with the Combined Authority and other partners, and</p>

we are delivering new active travel infrastructure through the government's ATF4 funding and behavioural change campaigns.

It is important that the County Council reflects on the challenges and opportunities facing the network and more on that, again, will be coming to the December Highways and Transport Committee.

Just responding to some of the other things in the question, the papers for decision at this Council come from a range of internal and external partners, and all of the motions to this Council come from the Conservative opposition and not from the Joint Administration. However, I think there will almost certainly be a significant degree of reflection of the Joint Administration's priority of climate change and improving active and public transport in the debating on those motions.

Petitions

Petition relating to the reintroduction of weedkilling

Statement from Councillor Charlie Marks, Fenland District Councillor for the Chatteris North and Manea ward:

Thank you Chair and Councillors for allowing me to speak today regarding my petition, reference lack of weed control in Cambridgeshire by the Council Highways.

I intend to keep this brief. Over the years, weed control had been carried out by CCC both in the county's towns and villages, and I understand a decision was taken by the Council to stop this procedure in the last round of budgeting, although it was going to be with consultation with both the Town and District Councils in the first quarter of 2022. Something that has only just happened in the last quarter of 2022.

In the meantime, the weeds have run riot and grown in some places up to three feet in height in Manea, the village I live in and represent as a Fenland District Councillor, and also throughout Fenland District too. These weeds have been allowed to grow along the kerbs and pathways, even through the pathways themselves, which last year were resurfaced at great cost to CCC. This is unacceptable to many residents of Fenland, as it is making our towns and villages look untidy, and some have said look like ghettos.

Even worse the roadside drains are now blocked with vegetation, which during a medium or heavy downpour of rain cause localised flooding to properties. This I saw firsthand a couple of weeks ago when I got called to a property of a young family at 11.00p.m. at night, as the water had entered their property following a downpour due to a drain being blocked with vegetation further down their road. Once we removed the weeds, the water ran free and stopped the flooding.

Councillors, a less charitable speaker would say the reason for stopping the spraying of weeds on footpaths and roadsides was purely down to saving money, and nothing to do with the environment or fauna or flora, but I'm sure that may have been in part why this decision was made. However, I would like to point out that any weed killer used has to pass stringent tests and is to a standard not to cause harm to the wildlife etc. Unfortunately, the saving made this year by not carrying out weed control will, I am sure, be far outweighed by the costings going forward which the Council will have to pick up regarding unblocking drains, repairing ingress of weeds through tarmac on footpaths etc, and also indirectly the cost to residents who have already seen their properties flood through no fault of their own.

In summary, I, as many of the residents I represent and fellow Councillors in Fenland, believe this cost cutting exercise has not worked and would ask the immediate reinstatement of weed control by spraying across not only Fenland but Cambridgeshire too.

Thank you.

Recorded Vote – 17 October 2023 - (Agenda Item 11 (a) – Motion from Councillor Count)

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote	COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote
AMBROSE-SMITH D	Con	X				HOWELL M	Con	X			
ATKINS M	Lib Dem		X			HOWITT R	Lab		X		
BATCHELOR H	Lib Dem		X			HOY S	Con	X			
BECKETT A	Lib Dem		X			HUNT B	Con	X			
BILLINGTON K	Con				X	KINDERSLEY S	Lib Dem		X		
BIRD G	Lab				X	KING JONAS	Con				X
BLACK M	Lab		X			KING MARIA	Lib Dem		X		
BODEN C	Con	X				KING SIMON	Con	X			
BRADNAM A	Lib Dem		X			MCDONALD P	Lib Dem		X		
BULAT A	Lab		X			MCGUIRE M	Con				X
BYWATER S	Con	X				MESCHINI E	Lab		X		
CONNOR D	Con	X				MILNES B	Lib Dem		X		
CORNEY S	Con	X				MURPHY E	Lib Dem		X		
COSTELLO A	Con	X				NETHSINGHA L	Lib Dem		X		
COUNT S	Con				X	PRENTICE K	Con	X			
COUTTS P	Lib Dem		X			RAE	Lab		X		
CRISWELL S J	Con	X				REYNOLDS K	Con	X			
DAUNTON C	Lib Dem		X			SANDERSON T	Ind		X		
DEW D	Lib Dem				X	SCHUMANN J	Ind	X			
DUPRE L	Lib Dem		X			SEEFF G	Lib Dem		X		
FERGUSON S	Ind		X			SHAILER N	Lab		X		
FRENCH J	Con	X				SHARP A	Con	X			
FULLER R	Con				X	SLATTER P	Lib Dem		X		
GARDENER I	Con				X	SMITH M	Con	X			
GAY N	Lab		X			TAYLOR S	Ind		X		
GOLDSACK M	Con	X				THOMPSON F	Lib Dem		X		
GOODLIFFE B	Lab		X			TIERNEY S	Con	X			
GOUGH N	Lib Dem		X			VAN DE VEN S	Lib Dem		X		
GOWING J	Con	X				WHELAN A	Lib Dem		X		
HATHORN R	Lib Dem		X			WILSON G	Lib Dem		X		
HAY A	Con	X									
Total						Total	61	21	32	0	8

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Questions under Council Procedure Rule 9.1

Question to the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board –
Councillor Nethsingha

Question from Councillor Sam Hoy:

Thank you. My question relates to the Combined Authority Board meeting held on 26 July, Agenda Item 10 C. The Combined Authority, under the current Mayor, failed adequately to administer grants for the Warm Homes Programme, and he had to hand back over £100m to the government as a result. Now the CPCA has signed up to administer grants to support the Local Net Zero Programme. What confidence does the Leader of the Council have that the CPCA under the current Mayor will be any more successful in administering the new Local Net Zero Programme than he has been with the Warm Homes Programme?

Response from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you. I have some confidence that the Mayor and the Combined Authority will be better at delivering the Net Zero Programme than they were the Warm Homes Programme. My reason for that is that one of the main problems with delivering the previous grant mechanism was the way in which it was administered by central government. The rules around how that money had to be spent, the timescales within which it had to be spent, meant that it was extremely difficult for the Combined Authority and the officers of the Combined Authority, who were tasked with trying to get that money out to people's homes, to do so. The new grants are slightly better, they are still, the timescales for spending are still one or two years rather than a properly timed length, a kind of proper plan for length of time within in which providers and residents are able to understand what government programmes are available to whom and when. But the initial ones were set up with a timescale of only a year, and by the time it was clarified exactly how much money had to be spent, there was only nine months left to spend it during which time there was an expectation that providers would gear up to find the specific homes which were eligible. So a huge amount of the problem with spending that was to do with the way central government set it up. It is slightly better.

Supplementary question from Councillor Sam Hoy:

Yes, and I appreciate your point about timescales but why is it that other Combined Authority areas were able to get their money out? For example, West Midlands got all of their money out. So what is it about our Combined Authority that made them less able than others to get the money out, given they all had the same timeframe.

Response from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

So the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was responsible for the whole of the south and south east area. It was responsible for an absolutely vast area to try and get its money out into, and it also had a very large amount of money, much larger than other Combined Authority areas. It only managed to spend a portion of that. All of the money that was available to be spent in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was spent. It was the rest of the area that was not spent. I don't think that any of us should be ashamed of the idea that we were ambitious in trying to get more people's homes insulated. We didn't manage to get as many insulated as we would have liked.