

COUNTY COUNCIL: MINUTES

Please note the meeting can be viewed on YouTube at the following link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sDC_2uCp80

Date: Tuesday 21st July 2020

Time: 10:30am – 12:55pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Present: Councillors:
M McGuire (Chairman)
L Every (Vice-Chairwoman)
D Ambrose Smith D Giles L Nethsingha
B Ashwood M Goldsack L Nieto
A Bailey J Gowing K Reynolds
H Batchelor L Harford T Rogers
I Bates N Harrison T Sanderson
C Boden A Hay J Scutt
A Bradnam R Hickford M Shuter
S Bywater M Howell M Smith
D Connor S Hoy A Taylor
A Costello P Hudson S Tierney
S Count B Hunt S van de Ven
S Crawford D Jenkins D Wells
S Criswell L Jones J Whitehead
K Cuffley N Kavanagh J Williams
P Downes S Kindersley G Wilson
L Dupre S King J Wisson
J French I Manning T Wotherspoon
R Fuller P McDonald
I Gardener E Meschini

Apologies: C Richards, J Schumann, M Shellens and S Taylor

226. MINUTES – 19TH MAY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2020 were approved as a correct record and it was agreed that they would be signed by the Chairman when the Council returned to its offices.

227. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

228. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members and substitute members of the Planning Committee declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item No. 8(a) (Motion from Councillor Steve Tierney), in order to avoid predetermination if the project under discussion were to be downsized at a later date or any further Energy-from-Waste facility proposals

were submitted for consideration in the future. The Committee members and substitute members declaring an interest were Councillors Ashwood, Batchelor, Bradnam, Connor, Crawford, Fuller, Gardener, Gowing, Harford, Howell, Hudson, Hunt, Jenkins, Jones, Kavanagh, Kindersley, Scutt and Smith, and all left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Wotherspoon also declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item No. 8(a) (Motion from Councillor Steve Tierney) as the Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, as the Executive Director: Place and Economy would be consulting the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this committee on any delegated decision. Councillor Wotherspoon also left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Smith declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item No. 8(b) (Motion from Councillor Peter McDonald) due to her partner being a farmer.

229. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman reported that no questions had been received from members of the public.

230. PETITIONS

The Chairman reported that one petition had been received from a member of the public. **Appendix B** sets out the text of the petition and the presenter's speech introducing it.

231. ITEMS FOR DETERMINATION FROM GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Treasury Management Report – Quarter Four Update 2019-20

It was moved by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, Councillor Count, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Hickford, that the recommendation from the General Purposes Committee, as set out in the report, be approved.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Note the Treasury Management Quarter Four Report for 2019-20; and
- b) Agree the amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy set out in this report, and delegate any other consequential or technical amendments associated with Multi Class Credit to the Chief Finance Officer.

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

232. CONSTITUTION AND ETHICS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

Decision Review Process

It was moved by the Chairwoman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Every, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Reynolds, that the recommendations of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, as set out in the report, be approved.

It was resolved by a majority that full Council:

- a) Approve an increase in the number of members of General Purposes Committee required to initiate a review of a decision taken by a Policy and Service Committee from eight to nine; and
- b) Authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairwoman of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, to make any other minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.

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

233. MOTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE 10

Four motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

(a) Motion from Councillor Steve Tierney

[Councillors Ashwood, Batchelor, Bradnam, Connor, Crawford, Fuller, Gardener, Gowing, Harford, Howell, Hudson, Hunt, Jenkins, Jones, Kavanagh, Kindersley, Scutt, Smith and Wotherspoon left the meeting for the duration of this motion]

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

In light of the current difficulties and restrictions due to Coronavirus it is difficult for the public to hear, to voice and to be heard when they have strong opinions on a subject that affects their lives. Therefore it is vital that we as a council act now to highlight our concerns, so that despite the impacts of Coronavirus the Public are aware that we still are actively opposing this proposal.

This Council understands that there is a proposal to build an Incinerator Facility in Wisbech.

Incinerators can be wasteful. They can burn much of what is otherwise recyclable and their demand for fuel can sometimes result in a reduction in recycling due to their need to bid for more and more waste at a specific calorific value to feed the 24 hour combustion process. This means that it is possible for incineration to lead to a reduction in recycling and can discourage efforts to preserve resources. This is contrary to the waste hierarchy that seeks to avoid the production of waste in the first instance, followed by re-use and recycling ahead of any disposal methods.

Waste Incineration is not a truly renewable source of energy. Incinerator companies are marketing “waste-to-energy” as a source of renewable energy but unlike other renewables the fuel does not come from infinite natural processes. On the contrary, it is sourced from finite resources.

Burning waste produces emissions. Burning waste has to be carefully controlled and even the most advanced technologies cannot guarantee the capture of all particulate matter (fine pollutants), so there is still the chance that air, soil and water can be contaminated, with some of the pollutants having the potential to end up entering the food chain.

Burning waste often creates less employment opportunities than recycling. Incinerators offer relatively few jobs when compared to recycling. The large footprint of a huge Incinerator could clearly produce more jobs as a regular manufacturing space. Other than at the construction phase, the idea that the Incinerator is a valuable job creator for local people is questionable.

The World is embracing Zero Waste, and Incineration should be seen as a backwards step. “Waste-to-energy” is often described as a good way to extract energy from resources, but if the waste burnt is capable of being recycled it works against the circular economy, and against the fundamental principles of the waste hierarchy. For those that are concerned about Climate Change, this proposal could therefore contribute to Climate Change, both from the facility itself and the necessary road mileage required to source the necessary feedstock to run it – all at a time when this Council has declared a climate emergency.

Wisbech Roads will be heavily affected. An Incinerator of the size proposed is likely to create hundreds of additional large lorry journeys daily creating significant additional congestion and wear and tear on already busy roads.

Wisbech Rail is under threat. Wisbech’s long held hope to re-open its rail line has been championed by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the local MP and all local Councils. Millions of pounds have been invested to get to the current point. The proposed location of the Incinerator limits the potential options for a new rail station and may cut off part of the potential route it could take.

In 2019, Wisbech Town Council’s motion to oppose the Incinerator project met with nearly unanimous support, as did the February 2020 Fenland District Council motion. An original local campaign opposing the Incinerator has since been joined by a second Campaign doing the same thing. Rallies, public meetings and large campaigns have taken place, and many Environmental Groups are opposed to incineration due to the issues already discussed. The local public are overwhelmingly opposed to the building of an Incinerator in Wisbech.

The Incinerator proposal is of such a large size that it bypasses the usual Planning route through local Councils and instead will be decided directly at Government level. This means the County Council will be a statutory consultee, but will not be the decision maker in this instance.

It is important that local people see that the elected councillors of Cambridgeshire County Council understand the strength of public opinion

against the Incinerator and that they are willing to stand up and be counted in the campaign to try and prevent it ever happening.

This Council states that:

1. We do not support the construction of an incinerator in Wisbech.
2. We will use all legal powers and avenues available to us to oppose any plans to build any Incinerators in Wisbech.
3. We will write to the Secretary of State to make clear our opposition to these plans.

Following a period of debate, a recorded vote on the motion was taken in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5. The names of those Members who voted for the motion, and those who abstained, are set out below.

For (36)

D Ambrose Smith	P Downes	S Hoy	T Rogers
A Bailey	L Dupre	S King	T Sanderson
I Bates	L Every	I Manning	M Shuter
C Boden	J French	P McDonald	A Taylor
S Bywater	D Giles	M McGuire	S Tierney
A Costello	M Goldsack	E Meschini	D Wells
S Count	N Harrison	L Nethsingha	J Williams
S Criswell	A Hay	L Nieto	G Wilson
K Cuffley	R Hickford	K Reynolds	J Wisson

Abstain (1)

J Whitehead

The motion was therefore carried.

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

(b) Motion from Councillor Peter McDonald

The following motion was proposed by Councillor McDonald and seconded by Councillor Bradnam:

The Council notes that:

- With only 6 months to go until the UK leaves the European Union (EU), the National Farmers Union (NFU) is urging the government to back up its assurances to uphold British farming's high production standards post-Brexit with firm actions.
- NFU President Minette Batters wrote in January to the then Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Theresa Villiers, asking her to establish a Trade, Food & Farming Standards Commission to ensure the UK's future trade policy does not

undermine British farming's high environmental and animal welfare standards.

- At the NFU's Conference in February, former Defra Secretary Michael Gove agreed to the NFU's request to introduce the commission but the body has yet to be established.

The Council further notes that:

- It is proposed that the prospects of a trade deal between the UK and the USA be negotiated quickly, and both the US government and the US food industry have been clear that they expect existing regulatory barriers relating to standards of production to be removed. The Trade Bill 2020 is currently before Parliament.
- Alongside this, in the event of a no-deal by January 2021 the UK government plans to reduce import tariffs on nearly all imports of agricultural products, effectively removing the only protection that currently prevents food which has been produced to lower standards coming into the UK.
- British farmers are proud to produce to some of the highest standards of animal welfare, environmental protection and food safety in the world. Yet, even if we leave the EU with a deal, there is a very real risk that we will have to compete with food imports that have been produced using methods and products that would be illegal on British farms. This would not only be a betrayal of our values but of British farmers whose businesses would be undercut, as with lower standards comes lower costs of production.
- While the government has consistently said it has no intention of allowing the UK's high standards of production to be undermined in future trade deals with the US for example, there has been little detail about how it will back up this commitment.

This Council:

- Calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Defra welcoming and supporting the proposal for a Trade and Agriculture Commission at the Department of International Trade and calling for its powers to be made statutory as part of the Trade Bill currently before Parliament.

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

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

(c) Motion from Councillor Ian Manning

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Manning and seconded by Councillor Scutt. The motion included alterations from the version included on the agenda and were agreed by the meeting without discussion:

Council notes:

- US Police officers have been charged with the murder of George Floyd on 25th May 2020.
- Previous racially aggravated murders, crimes and mistreatment of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in the US, UK and beyond, including but not limited to Stephen Lawrence, Daren Cumberbatch, Julian Cole, Joy Gardner, Adrian Thompson, Mark Duggan, Cherry 'Dorothy' Groce, Edson Da Costa, Rashan Charles, Michael Powell, Nuno Cardoso, Adrian McDonald, Olaseni Lewis, Daniel Adewole, Trevor Smith, Sarah Reed, Jermaine Baker, Sheku Bayoh, Kevin Clarke, Leon Briggs, Anthony Grainger, Kingsley Burrell, Jacob Michael, Mzee Mohammed Daley, Derek Bennett, Azelle Rodney, and Sean Rigg.
- BAME people are 54% more likely than white people to be fined under the new coronavirus lockdown laws.
- In the UK 26% of instances of police using firearms are against Black people, despite Black people making up only 3.3% of the population.
- 51% of young men in custody in the UK are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, despite these groups making up only 14% of the UK population.
- Around two thirds of healthcare staff who have died as a result of COVID-19 are from a BAME background whereas they make up 20% of the overall workforce.
- Black people are significantly more targetted for stop and suspiciousless search than white people.

Council believes:

- Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals is a serious problem in the UK and in Cambridgeshire.
- Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete.
- Every Local Authority has a responsibility to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and associated public sector equality duty, and this Council has addressed this by developing the Single Equalities Strategy 2018-22 which was endorsed by Full Council.

Council notes the importance for public confidence of identifiable immediate action, and therefore within the next six months resolves to:

1. Write to the Minister for Schools and local MPs, asking them to provide resources to schools to support them in providing further historical context for events normally only seen through the lens of white British history.
- ~~2. Conduct an audit of street names and any public monuments this Council is responsible for which name individuals or organisations explicitly associated with the slave trade, and bring a report to the relevant committee with suggested remedial actions. These actions should take note of the LGA best practise advice in this area: <http://www.local.gov.uk/responding-calls-public-realm-changes>.~~
3. Ask the Combined Authority to produce a toolkit for businesses to help broaden their understanding of race inequality in the workplace, including but not limited to materials, signposts to relevant local groups and training that can be provided for staff, and links to relevant networks. This Council to share our best practise to help with this goal.
4. Report on the BAME pay gap within the pay gap report, explicitly breaking down by minority group within BAME.

On a long term basis Council believes there is the need to further address racism, and therefore resolves to, over time:

5. Ask the police to report on what measures have been put in place to reduce the disproportionality of BAME people affected by the use of stop and search powers and how often are these measures are reviewed, and to provide a regular report on their web site as to initiatives and progress.
- ~~6. Consult with BAME communities over other monuments and street names that they identify as having possible racist connections and bring a report back to committee to discuss what actions, if any, to take.~~
7. Instruct Council Officers to incorporate a trial of the 'name-blind' model of recruitment in the upcoming review of recruitment practises when recruiting new employees.
8. Ask the Cambridgeshire library service to provide further prominence and content and events on BAME history and culture in Council Libraries, including continuing to celebrate Black History Month in conjunction with the districts.
9. Adopt an actively anti-racist outlook within areas we have influence, by routinely calling for transparent reporting and continuous monitoring of the impact of these organisations on the BAME community.

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

(d) Motion from Councillor Elisa Meschini

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Meschini and seconded by Councillor Crawford:

Council notes:

- On 17th March 2020 the Government issued Hospital Discharge Requirements to all NHS trusts across England and this led to elderly patients being very quickly discharged from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough hospitals into Care Home settings without the level of infection control required to prevent spread of the virus or requirement to properly test all patients before discharge.
- Some care homes and their staff were not properly prepared nor trained to receive these older people, nor had the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or safe procedures been provided and the lives of other care home residents and care home staff were then put at risk of infection.
- Since then and as of 2nd July 2020, 69 out of 131 care homes in Cambridgeshire have reported an outbreak.
- As of 26th June 2020, 127 deaths were reported in Cambridgeshire care homes, where Covid-19 was quoted as the cause of death on the death certificate (43 in Cambridge, 16 in East Cambridgeshire, 16 in Fenland, 32 in Huntingdonshire and 20 in South Cambridgeshire), and 538 deaths were reported to have occurred in Cambridgeshire care homes to the Care Quality Commission by home care managers, indicating a large number of excess deaths.

Cambridgeshire County Council resolves to initiate efforts to work together with agencies including Public Health England (PHE) and the District and City Councils on a specific independent report covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on what happened to cause excess care home deaths between March and June 2020, how and where the infection arrived into care homes from, and the lessons learnt.

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

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

234. QUESTIONS

Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 9.2)

Three questions were submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2, as set out in **Appendix C**.

Chairman
13th October 2020

COUNTY COUNCIL – 21ST JULY 2020

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Chairman's Commendation

The Chairman announced the start of a scheme for this Council to formally recognise the efforts of individuals, community and voluntary groups and businesses for the additional support they have provided across Cambridgeshire since the national pandemic was recognised.

The scheme which has the support of all Group leaders gives all of our elected members the opportunity to put forward suggestions of people in their own Divisions whose efforts are worthy of receiving an official Chairman's Commendation. Further details of the scheme and how Members can nominate individuals or businesses for it will be sent to all Members this week.

MESSAGES

Armed Forces Week 22 – 27 June

The Chairman was delighted to be able to mark Armed Forces Week by showing his appreciation via video to the men and women who are serving, or have served in the military, many of whom are amongst our own staff. Armed Forces Week is a chance to show support for currently serving troops, including reservists, as well as veterans, cadets and their families.

Cambridgeshire County Council is among the signatories to The Armed Forces Covenant, a commitment from public and private organisations to support the active and retired Armed Forces community.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 21ST JULY 2020

ITEM 5 – PETITIONS

Text of the petition titled ‘Protect Wessex Place Cut Through’ containing 564

The Wessex Place path leading from McGrath Avenue to Huntingdon Road and Castle Road is a key thoroughfare for pedestrians and cyclists from Castle, Arbury, West Chesterton and surrounds making their way to shop, worship, get to work and school, catch the bus and go to Castle Mound, Shire Hall and the green forecourt as well as to and from the City Centre. A recent residents' survey recorded that the average number of journeys made on foot or by cycle on a weekday and based on a sample of six hours at different times of the day was two journeys per minute.

The footpath has permissive rights of public access and is not a right of way. Residents are concerned that the leasing of Shire Hall and associated buildings for development by Brookgate (the railway station area developers) may jeopardise access or that, in any event, access is not necessarily protected.

We seek to call upon the County Council to take all steps within its power to ensure that public access to the Wessex footpath by way of these permissive rights is protected in perpetuity.

We therefore call upon the County Council to take the following action for the benefit of all Cambridgeshire residents:

- i. Devise a legal way to protect public access to that part of the Wessex Place footpath that is owned by the County to ensure that public access to that area of the Wessex place footpath is protected in perpetuity.
- ii. Negotiate with all those having an interest in the Wessex Place footpath to ensure that positive cooperation between all such parties devises a legal way to ensure public access to the footpath in its entirety is maintained in perpetuity.
- iii. In accordance with i. and ii. above to ensure that public access to the Wessex Place footpath from McGrath Avenue is protected in perpetuity.

Speech by Dr Lesley Dee to introduce the petition

Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning in support of the Wessex Place footpath petition, which has attracted 564 signatures. I'd like to remind you first of all of what we're going to try to achieve. I want to present some statistical evidence in support of our petition and finally give some reasons why we believe that the footpath should remain open for public access.

What do we want? In the light of the decision to lease Shire Hall and the surrounding buildings to private developers, we are requesting that the County Council finds a legal way to protect public access to the footpath in perpetuity. The footpath provides an important link between the communities of North Cambridge and the rest of the city leading from McGrath Avenue to Castle Hill and the city centre. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the path, it is paved, well-maintained and has concrete steps up to the Shire Hall level, with a cycle ramp and a rail to assist those who need it. There's no doubt that the path is very well used. We've

conducted two surveys of use of the footpath by cyclists and pedestrians – one in 2011 and the second in November 2019. We found that there has been a substantial increase in its use. In 2011, the average number of journeys made, based on a sample of five hours at different times of the day, found that 1.6 journeys were made per minute. In 2019, the average was just over 2 journeys per minute.

So, apart from the obvious fact that the path is very well used, why else should it remain open? First, it provides a much safer option for parents, children and others than having to use the busy and polluted “A” roads that surround this area – the A roads particularly of Victoria and Chesterton Roads. Secondly, it supports the use of sustainable methods of transport. Cambridge City Council policy, and indeed national policies, are now weight firmly in favour of walking and cycling, and it appeared counter-intuitive to make these activities more difficult. It also offers quick access for several hundred local households to the important bus routes, including the guided bus, that go down Castle Hill. Thirdly, it provides access to local amenities, work places, the churches of St Giles and St Luke’s, including their school and nursery, local shops, pubs, the colleges and the green space including Castle Mound as well as the city centre. Finally, the route is part of the local history of this neighbourhood. It’s provided access to Castle Hill since 1934 and has been an official pathway since 1979.

In conclusion, we are asking the City Council, on behalf of the many people who use this footpath every day, to ensure that access to this invaluable pathway is maintained in perpetuity. Thank you, Chair.

COUNTY COUNCIL – 21 JULY 2020
WRITTEN QUESTION UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.2

1. Question from Councillor Susan van de Ven

On Monday 29th June 2020 in an online public meeting organised by the National Association of Headteachers, the National Education Union and Early Education, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, Vicky Ford MP, told an audience of teachers, support staff and parents that she strongly supported the continuation of the provision that maintained nursery schools deliver across England. She said that she was arguing strongly for the Treasury to provide the funding required to save nursery schools from the threat of closure that currently exists from April 2021 when the current funding arrangements are scheduled to end. The minister recognised the enhanced education and support for vulnerable children and families that is provided by maintained nurseries.

However, despite the government's clearly stated public position being that they wish to see maintained nurseries remain open to provide the high quality education they currently provide, Cambridgeshire County Council is choosing to pursue plans for the closure of the seven existing maintained nursery schools. The Department for Education has publicly stated, through the relevant minister, that it expects to find a solution to keep the schools open. It is therefore unclear why the council is choosing to pursue such an aggressive approach to forcing the closure of the seven nursery schools in the county.

Would the council leader care to explain why Cambridgeshire is choosing to seek to close down this exceptional provision that supports so many children and families in the face of government plans to find a way to save the provision with funding as stated by the Minister for Children and Families?

Response from Councillor Simon Bywater, Chairman of Children and Young People Committee

Thank you for highlighting this critical area. Cambridgeshire has a rich history in supporting its nursery schools and this commitment remains. There are however financial concerns as a subsidy paid by the government to support nursery schools was due to be withdrawn. We made representation to the Department for Education on this last year including a letter from the Leader of the council to the Secretary of State for Education to ask for this funding to be mainstreamed. A paper was brought to the Children and Young People Committee on the 12th July 2019 outlining the challenges and how we would look to maintain this provision if this funding ended. We have worked with Heads and Governors on this review. We have no funding stream to subsidise the loss of the £1.1m the subsidy currently brings. However in education funding announcements in the autumn, the government agreed to continue to fund this subsidy for a further year and we have put on hold any plans to review the nursery schools until we

have more information on the future funding. We hope the government will make a long term financial commitment to Nursery schools. Officers have not followed an aggressive approach to forcing their closure, quite the opposite and there are no plans to close them. I kindly request the councillor supports our challenge to government to sustain funding for this essential provision.

2. Question from Councillor Lorna Dupré

Shocking figures have been collated by Layla Moran MP and published in the media this week which show that almost 2,500 children have been admitted to hospital with malnutrition in the first six months of this year—double the number for the corresponding period last year.

The largest number of cases reported (915) was from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust. Fewer than two-thirds of NHS Trusts responded, suggesting that the real total figure is much higher; and data from the Food Foundation published in May revealed that almost one-fifth of households with children had been unable to access enough food in the preceding weeks.

These figures do not include adult cases of malnutrition.

Bearing in mind that

- this news strikes at the heart of this Council's corporate priorities (a good quality of life for everyone, thriving places for people to live, and the best start for Cambridgeshire's children), and
- this Council is responsible for a number of services that could alleviate this situation, and is a partner with other public bodies which it can influence,

will the Leader of the Council

1. Instruct the Chief Executive of this Council to liaise as a matter of urgency with CUH NHS Trust and other health partners to obtain more information about the cause of the rise in cases and the nature of the cohort of children involved including location as far as possible;
2. Request officers to work with partner organisations to identify the current sources of support in Cambridgeshire for families struggling for whatever reason with access to nutritious food, review these to find out why they have not been able to address the very significant number of cases of child malnutrition in Cambridgeshire, and consider what could be done to improve the effectiveness of multi-agency systems for addressing food poverty and its consequences;
3. Arrange for an initial report to be brought to the August meeting of the Health Committee outlining findings to that date and recommending an appropriate council-wide programme of action; and

- 4 Write to Government calling on it to implement the recommendation of the Environmental Audit Committee that a minister be appointed with responsibility for tackling hunger and food insecurity in the UK?

Response from Councillor Peter Hudson, Chairman of Health Committee

Concerns were raised by Cllr Dupré regarding the numbers of children admitted to hospital due to malnutrition as reported in various news articles this week: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/food-poverty-hunger-child-malnutrition-hospital-layla-moran-coronavirus-a9615161.html>
<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/local-news/county-council-leader-says-incumbent-18599742>
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/12/cases-of-child-malnutrition-double-in-last-six-months>
<https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/incumbent-on-cambridgeshire-county-council-to-act-on-child-malnutrition-9116300/>

“Whilst the story headlines concentrates on children it is clear a number of statements require further examination, as their sensational nature have much more complex answers. For example the age group is adults and children over 5 and these figures represent the Addenbrooke’s catchment area which is far wider than just Cambridgeshire. Additionally special factors such as Addenbrooke’s specialist services dealing with illnesses, transplants mean there is a higher incidence of specific dietary requirement malnutrition’s due to impacts of treatments including surgery in some cases. The full details are below.”

We thank Cllr Dupré for raising this important issue as children and young people experiencing malnutrition in Cambridgeshire is something we take very seriously and our top priority is always the welfare and wellbeing of all our children and young people. This is why we are working very closely together with our partners on initiatives such as the Best Start in Life programme¹ which was launched at the end of last year to improve outcomes for all children and particularly the most vulnerable. Responses to the concerns raised are summarised below.

1. Liaising with health partners to obtain more information about the cause of the rise in cases and the nature of the cohort of children:

1.1 Cambridge University Hospital

- Colleagues from CUH have informed us that they have had no FOI requests regarding admissions of children with malnutrition.

¹ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/health/popgroups/cyp/>

- However, in February 2020 there was an FOI request for the number of inpatients (**children and adults**) with malnutrition codes during the period 2015 to the 31st January 2020 in addition to information about food budgets etc. The total number provided as part of this FOI was 915 (Table 1) which consisted of adults and children with any of the following malnutrition codes: Kwashiorkor, Marasmic Kwashiorkor, Unspecified severe protein-energy malnutrition, Mild protein - energy malnutrition, Unspecified protein-energy malnutrition, Other malnutrition syndrome.

Table 1. *Number of inpatients (adults and children) with malnutrition codes at CUH provided in an FOI request in February 2020. *May include the same person being re-admitted on more than one occasion. Includes data up to the 31st of January 2020.*

Year	Number
2015	98
2016	186
2017	195
2018	192
2019	219
2020	25
Total	915

- Hence the widely quoted figure of 915 includes children and adults admitted over 5 years from the CUH catchment area and not just Cambridgeshire. It is unclear what the doubling in numbers refers to.
- CUH is quaternary specialist centre for intestinal failure and small bowel transplantation which by definition is accompanied by malnutrition and hence the numbers may be higher than elsewhere in the country.
- In addition, while the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase the number of families experiencing food poverty and we should be monitoring this and supporting these families, the data quoted from the FOI does not show this for the following reasons
 - Includes data up to the 31st of January 2020, prior to the start of the pandemic.
 - Chronic malnutrition due to food poverty is likely to develop over many years and hospital admissions may not capture issues related to food poverty but may rather reflect underlying health conditions.

In order to explore this issue further we have looked at other data sources

1.2 National Child Measurement Programme:

The latest National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data from the 2018/19 academic year includes information on the prevalence of underweight children. The figures are outlined in the table 2 below:

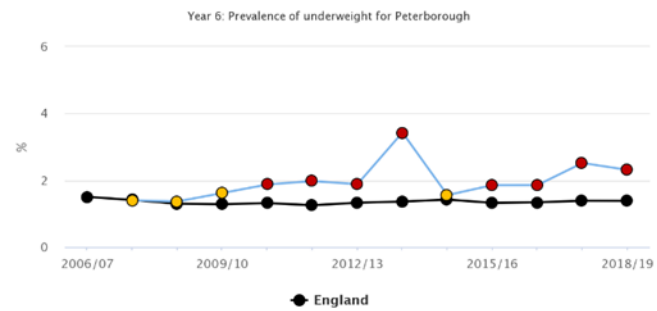
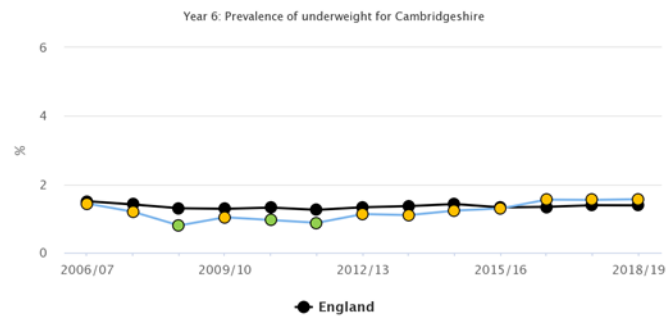
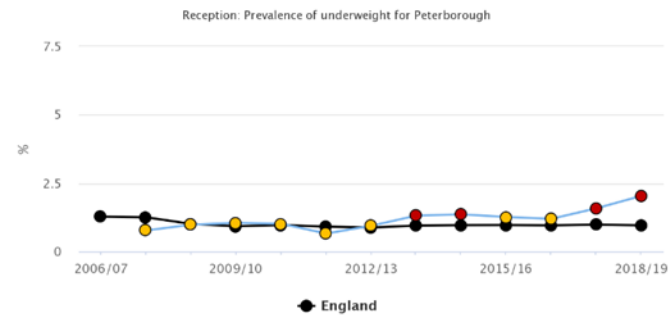
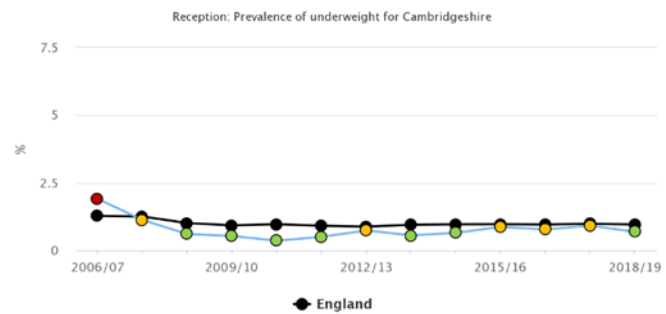
Table 2: Prevalence of underweight across Cambridgrshire and Peterborough NCMP data 2018/19

Underweight 2018/2019	Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire Nearest Neighbour	Peterborough	Peterborough Nearest Neighbour	England
Reception	N=45, 0.7%	0.8%	N=57, 2.0%	1.2%	1.0%
Year 6	N=99, 1.6%	1.3%	N=64, 2.3%	1.5%	1.4%

Green: Statistically lower than England, Yellow: statistically similar to England, Red: Statistically higher than England.

As can be seen, the prevalence in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough increases between Reception and Year 6, and is worse than the England average in Peterborough for both age groups. When considering the latest 5 year trend data (graphs below), there has been a slight increase in Cambridgeshire among Year 6 aged children and an overall increase in Peterborough for both age groups.

There are some marked inequalities in the prevalence of underweight children across England in relation to both deprivation and ethnicity (particularly within BAME groups), although data is not available down to a local level.



2. Current sources of support in Cambridgeshire for families to address food poverty:

- In March 2020, a network of COVID-19 Coordination Hubs were established across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough . This comprises of the countywide coordination hub and local hubs led by district/city councils. The hubs support local arrangements, connecting with and supporting mutual aid and other community led initiatives, supporting residents across their communities, and responding to individual offers of help or requests for support.
- In collaboration with partner agencies, the hubs have been identifying the current provision that exists across Cambridgeshire to better understand how those experiencing food poverty are being supported, the current levels of demand but also identifying whether further support is needed and ensuring there is consistent access to nutritious food.
- Existing provision will be supported across the hub network and further supported through access to food via the County food warehouse when needed as a supply of emergency food will be retained and delivered to local hubs when needed. In addition, plans are being developed to use the DEFRA support funding (nationally £63million) to support and maintain local food networks.
- To ensure families are aware of what is available in their area, a range of communication channels have been identified and a campaign developed to proactively share messages across communities. This will also bring together a wider enablement offer including general wellbeing support and skill development in addition to support in accessing food.
- Learning from the short-term response over the summer will feed into the broader food poverty/insecurity work being developed as part of recovery.
- Public Health has worked with representatives across the region to better understand the problem of food poverty/insecurity in the region, particularly in relation to how this may be exacerbated due to COVID-19. These partners have included representatives from district councils, CEDAR (Centre for diet and activity research) at the University of Cambridge, Think Communities team and the COVID-19 Coordination Hubs.
- In addition to the immediate summer response, recommendations being explored by the partnership include:
 - Improve the nutritional content of food parcels as per [PHE guidance](#) or [Scotland's FSA guidance](#) and consider working in partnership with Trussell Trust Food Banks who have expertise in this area
 - Work with the local system to increase the uptake of free school meals and to ensure that the national [guidance](#) is followed with regards to provision of parcels and vouchers during the school holidays and school closures due to the pandemic.
 - Work with the local system to increase the uptake of healthy start vouchers which is currently low across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (~43-53% uptake among eligible families).
 - Work with Child and Family Centres to relaunch the Healthy Start vitamin distribution programme once the centres re-open
 - Improve signposting of families to healthy start vouchers, free school meals and food banks. This can be done at schools and when individuals sign up for Universal Credit

- Connect and align more of the activity, linked with food poverty/insecurity, taking place across the system to ensure a consistent approach across Cambridgeshire

3. Report to Health Committee outlining findings to that date and recommending an appropriate council-wide programme of action:

Given the responses to questions 2 & 3, is this still required? If yes, it would be good to clarify what further information would be helpful.

4. Write to Government calling on it to implement the recommendation of the Environmental Audit Committee:

In order to support members in consideration of this question, please see below information regarding the Environmental Audit Committee's key points and recommendations.

- [The Environmental Audit Committee](#) met in January 2019 to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UK. In particular to discuss SDG2 which relates to hunger, malnutrition and food security.
- Some of the key points from the committee were as follows:
 - There is evidence that food poverty is worsening in the UK.
 - The Trussell Trust (the largest food bank provider in the UK) have reported a 45% increase in emergency food supplies to people in crisis in 2017-2018 compared to 2013-2014.
 - In 2017-2018, the Trussell Trust distributed 1,332,952 three-day emergency food supplies of which 484,026 went to children.
 - Single parent household were most likely to access food assistance schemes.
- A summary of the recommendations made by the committee were as follows:
 - The UK is committed to implementing all of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. This includes SDG 2 which aims for zero hunger.
 - The Government should appoint a minister with responsibility and accountability for combatting hunger and food insecurity in the UK.
 - Investigation in to the scale, causes and impact of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition is required in order to implement strategies for improvement, and to subsequently monitor progress
 - The Government should work with the Office for National Statistics to measure the potential impact that Universal Credit may have on rates of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in pilot Universal Credit areas.
 - An under-nutrition assessment tool should be developed to assess under an overweight individuals, and,
 - Stunting (small height for age) in children should be recorded as part of NCMP.

3. Question from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha

At the Children and Young People Committee for July one of the financial losses for the council was £197,000 in losses from fines not imposed on parents. Please could you tell me the amount of income which the council has taken in fines from parents in Cambridgeshire for 2017, 2018 and 2019, broken down to each term.

If the information is available please could I also have information on how many of the children to whom such fines relate were on free school meals, how many were for children who have English as an additional language, and how many had a parents with a disability or mental health problem.

Please could I also have a breakdown of how many fines were levied by school.

Response from Councillor Simon Bywater, Chairman of Children and Young People Committee

Statutory Responsibilities

Cambridgeshire monitors school attendance through its Education Attendance team which operates under the [DfE guidance for schools attendance](#) developed under the coalition government in 2013. This guidance was updated to provide further guidance to Local Authorities on The Education Act 1996 that enshrined the local authorities role in promoting high school attendance.

The guidance outlines that –

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance. Local Authorities cannot act independently on attendance issues and have to have close working relationships with schools and share information to enable action to take place.

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices are interventions available to promote better school attendance and behaviour. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects. In exercising these powers governing bodies, head teachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties.

Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007¹⁷ set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. This includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices, after consulting all schools, including academies, and the police. The code should set out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice. These could include: a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year; one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission; and where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Cambridgeshire code of conduct can be found here - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/penalty-notice-code-of-conduct-november-2018-amended-march-2020-covid-19.pdf>

Non-attendance at school

Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence and if, with support from the school's attendance officer and / or the local authority Education Welfare Officer, your child's attendance fails to improve, the Education Welfare Officer will consider one of two courses of action:

- Penalty fine of £60 (if paid within 21 days), rising to £120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days have lapsed). Failing to pay the fine will result in prosecution.
- Prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Cost of Service

The service costs around £657k to operate annually employing 12 number of staff as outlined below –

- Admissions and Attendance Strategic Manager– 1FTE
- Education Welfare Legal Officer – 1FTE
- Education Welfare Officer – 9.6FTE

We also buy legal support from LGSS Law when required.

Information Requested

Appendix 1 outlines the income we have received. We are unable to provide detailed data at this time on the pupil characteristics. A list by school can be produced if required but not in time to respond to the formal question.

Appendix 1 – termly income from attendance since 2017

Term	Non-School Attendance Penalty Notices	Term Time Leave Penalty Notices
Autumn 2017 – East Cambs & Fenland	£1500	£21,050
Autumn 2017 – Hunts	£540	£8040
Autumn 2017 – South Cambs & City	£0	£4560
Spring 2018 – East Cambs & Fenland	£960	£19,260
Spring 2018 – Hunts	£1020	£11,700
Spring 2018 – South Cambs & City	£1320	£16,380
Summer 2018 – East Cambs & Fenland	£720	£62,580
Summer 2018 – Hunts	£1560	£43,320
Summer 2018 – South Cambs & City	£1980	£19,840
Autumn 2018 – East Cambs & Fenland	£960	£43,620
Autumn 2018 – Hunts	£1020	£28,560
Autumn 2018 – South Cambs & City	£1200	£18,360

Spring 2019 – East Cambs & Fenland	£2580	£30,120
Spring 2019 – Hunts	£3180	£24,120
Spring 2019 – South Cambs & City	£3120	£32,760
Summer 2019 – East Cambs & Fenland	£1260	£67,470
Summer 2019 – Hunts	£1680	£42,860
Summer 2019 – South Cambs & City	£1080	£32,940
Autumn 2019 – East Cambs & Fenland	£1260	£62,940
Autumn 2019 – Hunts	£1020	£46,020
Autumn 2019 – South Cambs & City	£1320	£41,280