

County Council: Minutes

Please note the meeting can be viewed here:

[Recording of the Full Council - YouTube](#)

Date: Tuesday 16th March 2021

Time: 10:30am – 2.12pm

Present:

Councillor M McGuire (Chairman)

Councillor L Every (Vice-Chairwoman)

D Ambrose Smith	J Gowing	T Rogers
B Ashwood	L Harford	T Sanderson
A Bailey	N Harrison	J Schumann
H Batchelor	A Hay	J Scutt
I Bates	M Howell	M Shellens
C Boden	S Hoy	M Shuter
A Bradnam	P Hudson	M Smith
S Bywater	B Hunt	A Taylor
D Connor	D Jenkins	S Taylor
A Costello	L Jones	S Tierney
S Count	N Kavanagh	S van de Ven
S Criswell	S Kindersley	D Wells
P Downes	S King	J Whitehead
L Dupré	I Manning	J Williams
J French	P McDonald	G Wilson
R Fuller	E Meschini	J Wisson
I Gardener	L Nethsingha	T Wotherspoon
D Giles	K Reynolds	
M Goldsack	C Richards	

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors Cuffley and Nieto.

263. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9th February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman when the Council returned to its offices.

264. Chairman's Announcements

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

The Chairman also thanked retiring Members for their support, drawing particular attention to the Vice-Chairwoman of Council, Councillor Every.

265. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Schumann declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda 9(b) as a Non-Executive Director of This Land Limited. He reported that, after making a statement when the Council reached the item, he would then leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

266. Public Question Time

The Chairman reported that one question had been received from a member of the public, as set out in Appendix B.

267. Petitions

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

268. Senior Manager Pay Data and Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 and Pay Gap Reporting

It was moved by the Chairman of the Staffing and Appeals Committee, Councillor Schumann, and seconded by the Chairman of Council, Councillor McGuire that the recommendation as set out in the report on the Council agenda, be approved.

In response to a question from Councillor Whitehead requesting statistics to show whether strategies used to close the gender pay gap had been successful, Councillor Schumann responded that this had been discussed in the Staffing and Appeals Committee meeting. He explained that last year was an anomaly as the staffing structure had changed, so a graph would not show an accurate trend in data. However, this request would be reflected in future year reports.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the Chief Officer Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 and the Pay Gap report 2021.

269. Appointment of the Chairman/woman of the Audit and Accounts Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board

It was moved by the Chairman of Council, Councillor McGuire and seconded by the Vice-Chairwoman, Councillor Every that the appointment of the Chairman of the Audit and

Accounts Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out on the agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Appoint Councillor Rogers as Chairman of the Audit and Accounts Committee and Councillor Steve Criswell as Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

270. Appointment to Outside Bodies

It was moved by the Chairman of Council, Councillor McGuire, and seconded by the Vice-Chairwoman, Councillor Every, and agreed unanimously to:

Appoint to the outside bodies set out in the report on the agenda.

271. Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure 10

Five motions had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

(a) Motion from Councillor Dupré

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Dupré and seconded by Councillor Bradnam, the motion included an amendment proposed by Councillor Schumann which was accepted as an alteration to her motion by Councillor Dupré and agreed by the meeting without discussion (Additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough):

This council is proud to be a partner in Natural Cambridgeshire, the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which launched its Doubling Nature vision last year. Achieving the vision depends on collaborative partnerships and the sharing of the vision with a wide range of stakeholders, including various agencies, organisations, communities, landowners, farmers and developers.

The proposed Fens Biosphere zone stretches from Wisbech in the north to Cambridge in the south, and from the county's western border to its eastern border. It includes the core zones of Holme Fen, Woodwalton Fen, the Nene Washes, the Ouse Washes, Wicken Fen, and Chippenham Fen. It encompasses large areas of farmland, a rich natural environment, historic scheduled monuments, and opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation. Biosphere status offers to help address particular challenges including the management of water and peatland.

~~Biosphere status is awarded by UNESCO to unique and valuable landscapes such as the Fens. Biospheres connect people, economies, and nature to secure a future where all can thrive, meeting the needs of current and future residents and working towards providing secure and happy futures for all. Biospheres aim to improve the natural environment, using new ideas, science, and technology to explore new ways of living every day in ways that solve global challenges.~~

Following the sustained work of a multi-agency partnership coordinated by Cambridgeshire ACRE, the proposed Fens Biosphere was awarded Candidate Status by UK Man and the Biosphere (UK MAB) on behalf of UNESCO in November 2019, opening the real possibility that the Fens Biosphere could become the UK's eighth UNESCO Biosphere designation—one of 714 in 129 countries, the only lowland Biosphere in the UK, and the only Biosphere in the East of England.

In order to gain UNESCO Biosphere designation, the Biosphere initiative must demonstrate evidence of widest public support through extensive public consultation and there is an additional requirement that young people be involved. Since being awarded candidate status, the Biosphere Project has therefore embarked on a thorough programme of consultation with local communities and businesses, including a conference in January 2021 attended by 164 participants.

Designation also requires the support of local authorities. Although several local authorities within the candidate area have voiced support, it is a requirement that this support be demonstrated through formal endorsement.

This Council therefore:

- ~~• recognises the value of the Fens Biosphere and formally supports its request for UNESCO Biosphere designation;~~
- ~~• authorises the Chief Executive to write formally to convey its support;~~
- ~~• authorises the championing of the Fens Biosphere initiative by asking the Chief Executive to write to all relevant local authorities to encourage them to do the same~~
- **notes the efforts of those involved to date in achieving Candidate Status;**
- **recognises there may be some potential value of the Fens Biosphere, but believes the implications of Biosphere Reserve status are not yet clear.**

Further, this Council notes:

- **the Government's recently closed White Paper consultation "Planning for the Future" which sets out plans for fundamental reform of England's planning system, the outcome of which is, as yet, unknown;**
- **we are unaware of any extensive consultation on the Fens Biosphere with Parish, Town and City Councils, communities and residents to date.**

This Council therefore:

- **recognises the potential value of the Fens Biosphere and requests further investigation of the implications and benefits of designation for Cambridgeshire before considering whether to formally support its request for UNESCO Biosphere designation, and**
- **instructs the Executive Director for Place and Economy to write to Cambridgeshire Acre to seek further information and report back to a future meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee with recommendations.**

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

(b) Motion from Councillor McDonald

The following motion was proposed by Councillor McDonald and seconded by Councillor Jenkins.

Officers have recently confirmed the out-standing loans to This Land Ltd are £112m, yet it remains unclear how many houses have been built or planned to be built over the next 5 years. The Council therefore calls for a full update and overview of the plans over the next 5 years to build out and sell the existing portfolio.

Following his declaration of a non-disclosable interest at minute 265, Councillor Schumann made a statement to the Council in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director of This Land Limited.

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

[Voting pattern: The majority of Conservatives against; Liberal Democrats, Labour, and Independents in favour, and one Conservative abstained.]

[Councillor Schumann was removed from this item and placed in the Zoom waiting room for the discussion and vote. Given that he was a panellist, the voting poll regardless of whether he was present appeared on his screen. Due to this unforeseen feature of the Zoom software, the vote was recorded but in order to nullify his vote and recognise the declaration his vote was to abstain.]

(c) Motion from Councillor Meschini

The Council was informed by Councillor Meschini that she would not move the motion.

(d) Motion from Councillor Scutt

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Scutt and seconded by Councillor Richards.

The 2020/2021 Real Living Wage rates were set down by the Living Wage Foundation as £9.50 per hour, being an increase of 20p for each hour of paid work. This meant that as at November 2020, more than 250,000 employees of Real Living Wage employers would benefit, the final implementation date of the rise being set as 6 May 2021. This contrasts with the compulsory National Living Wage, which is set at £8.72 per hour, applicable to all paid workers over 25 years of age only.

The Cambridgeshire County Council is not a Real Living Wage employer.

The contrast of the Real Living Wage (RLW) with the compulsory National Living Wage in terms of benefit to employer and employee is apparent. The RLW is determined on a calculation of cost of living based on a basket of ordinary, everyday household goods and services necessary for an ordinary, everyday household to live.

The National Living wage (NLW), in contrast, is based on a target of 60% of median earnings. It exists as the fifth tier of a complicated scheme which comprises the mandatory National Minimum Wage regime (with rates as from 1 April 2020 – revised annually):

- Adult rate (21 years and above – upper limit now 24 years) - £8.20
- Development rate (18-20 years) - £6.45
- Youth rate (16-17 years) - £4.55
- Apprentices (aged below 19 years or, for those in the first year of an apprenticeship, aged above 19 years) - £4.15
- NLW workers aged 25 years and above (not being in the first year of an apprenticeship) - £8.72

The County Council complies with its mandatory obligations under statute in paying the National Living wage. On 1 April 2019 the County Council commenced paying the National Joint Council (NJC) pay rates up to S02 level, so that since that date the County Council paid the NJC rate commencing at £9.00 per hour. In 2019, that overlapped with the Living Wage Foundation's then Real Living Wage (RLW) rate of £9.00 per hour. At that time, however, there was no assurance that this coincidence in rates would continue, and indeed it has not for the NJC rate for 2020-2021 is now £9.25.

Since commencement of the first lockdown in March 2020, more than 800 employers have joined the almost 7000 total employers accredited as Living Wage employers by the Living Wage Foundation. There is every good reason for the Council to join them by paying the RLW and making application to the Living Wage Foundation to become an accredited RLW employer:

- In 2019, the Council was paying the same amount per hour as the RLW by paying the NJC rate;
- The RLW recognises that a distinction between workers' wage rates based on age is fallacious and damaging to young workers who bear the same burden of household costs – there are no distinctions, for example, on the basis of age in the cost of household soap, potatoes or bread, sanitary items or toilet rolls, toothpaste, tea bags or vitamins;
- The RLW as set for 2020-2021 recognises that the impact of the pandemic on households, workers and families must be taken into account;
- This link to a Report – The Living Wage Employer Experience, Edmund Heery, David Nash, Deborah Hann provides an insight into the benefits accruing to RLW employers and employees: [Microsoft Word - Survey Report Final Draft KC.DOCX \(livingwage.org.uk\)](#) (accessed 24 February 2021)

The County Council therefore resolves that in light of the benefits to it as an employer and to Council employees:

1. That Cambridgeshire County Council adopts the Real Living Wage and becomes a committed Real Living Wage employer, so that it pays to all its employees now and for the future the Real Living Wage in accordance with the wage rates set by the Real Living Wage scale.
2. That the Cambridgeshire County Council seeks accreditation to the Living Wage Foundation.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives against; Labour and Liberal Democrat majority in favour; two Liberal Democrats and two Independents abstained.]

(e) Motion from Councillor Nethsingha

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

This Council thanks all those Members who are stepping down at the coming election for their public service to the people of Cambridgeshire. Being a Councillor is both an honour, and also hard work. Many of those who are stepping down have been councillors for many years. Whatever their political views, they deserve thanks for the service they have given to their residents and this council.

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

272. Questions

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

One question was submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.1, as set out in Appendix C.

(b) Questions on Fire Authority Issues

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

(c) Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 9.2)

Two questions were submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.2, as set out in Appendix D.

Chairman

County Council – 16th March 2021

Chairman's Announcements

People

Councillor Jill Taverner – Health Committee Member

It is with regret that the Chairman reports the death of Councillor Jill Taverner, Huntingdonshire District Council. Jill had been the District Council's representative on the County Council's Health Committee since January 2017.

The Council's thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues at this very sad time.

Former County Councillor Colin Shaw

It is also with regret that the Chairman reports the death of former County Councillor Colin Shaw, who represented the Abbey Division on behalf of the Labour Party from 1996 to 2005.

The Council's thoughts are with his family, and friends at this very sad time.

Chris Malyon, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer

Chris Malyon, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer retires at the end of April. Chris was appointed to the role of Chief Finance Officer for Cambridgeshire in January 2013. Following the appointment of the shared Chief Executive in 2015 a Deputy Chief Executive role was created to support the new shared arrangements, and Chris took on these additional responsibilities in September 2016.

Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health

Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health retires at the end of the April, having delayed her retirement plans so she could lead public health through the challenging winter period. Liz became the first joint director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2015. She was appointed Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire in 2006.

Messages

Chairman's Commendation Scheme

Following the launch last year of the Chairman's Commendation Scheme to celebrate the fantastic work of those who have gone above and beyond in supporting their local communities since lockdown began in March 2020, the Chairman was delighted to issue a further 11 certificates during February to individuals, businesses and community groups in recognition of their excellent

work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Full details of each Member's nomination can be seen on the council's website.

So that we can continue to recognise those from our local communities who continue to provide so much support, the scheme will continue to run to the end of April 2021.

Chairman marks a moment in time

The Chairman will be marking a moment in time on Monday 22 March when he buries a time capsule at the council's new headquarters in Alconbury. The time capsule will be filled with postcards from council staff, councillors and local school children describing life today during a pandemic and their hopes for Cambridgeshire in 25 years time. It will also include the front pages from newspapers in Cambridgeshire to show people what is in the news on the day. The Chairman will be burying the time capsule in the staff seating area outside of the new headquarters with an engraved slab marking its position. The aim is that there will be a ceremony in 2046, 25 years after the time-capsule has been buried.

County Council Public Question Time – 16th March 2021

Public Question No.1

Question from Indira Vadhia

So, I have a question on chalk streams, thank you everybody for your time. So, there are 220 chalk streams in the UK, representing 75-80% of this habitat type globally. Most of these chalk streams are located in the south and southeast of England. Many are within Cambridgeshire; from Burwell Spring and Burwell Brook in East Cambridgeshire to Melbourn Rock in South Cambridgeshire, and several brooks within Cambridge City itself.

Chalk streams are not only beauty spots but sources of clean water and habitats for many significant species such as brown trout and water vole. Nine Wells in south Cambridge supplied the city with clean, running water for over 250 years via Hobson's Conduit. The water from Nine Wells is also authorised to be used on surrounding farmland due to us having some of the lowest levels of rainfall in the country. It is clear how important chalk streams are to both our environment and to our people. They are rare and unique areas of biodiversity in our local surroundings, with a global importance.

However, unsustainable water abstraction poses a threat to our chalk streams; the Environment Agency has moved to protect 63 chalk streams in the UK by limiting this harmful practice. I believe that it would be in-keeping with the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy, in particular with reference to its focus on biodiversity, for the County Council to join efforts to recognise the importance of Cambridgeshire's chalk streams as natural habitats, including supporting restoration works and providing protection thereof.

I would therefore like to ask if the Council will support the adoption of Cambridgeshire's chalk streams as County Wildlife Sites. Thank you.

Response from Councillor Josh Schumann, Chairman of Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thank you very much. Sorry Chairman and sorry Miss Vadhia. Miss Vadhia, the County Council absolutely recognises the importance of chalk stream habitats for wildlife, and the many services they provide in terms of amenity and water resource. In Cambridgeshire, all main rivers are already designated as County wildlife sites. This encompasses a number of chalk streams. Where the chalk streams are ordinary water sources they are, however, not currently designated as CWS County wildlife site standard. The County Council are a member of the local County wildlife site partnership which identifies potential sites, provides information on management, with a view to enhancing and safeguard those local sites. The positive engagement and cooperation of landowners and their representative bodies can contribute significantly to the success of these partnerships. There is a set of agreed site selection criteria with measurable thresholds, and selection is based on whether a site meets the relevant criteria formed by detailed ecological surveys and expertise. Prior to selection being agreed, there is currently no selection criteria chalk streams. However, the County wildlife site partnership is currently looking to develop the developing chalk stream criteria the council is in support of this principle designation of chalk streams as County wildlife sites.

Management and maintenance of County wildlife sites fall to the landowner. For chalk streams, this would be the riparian landowner, i.e. the landowner whose land borders or includes a section of that water course. It is for this reason that landowners should be involved in the designation process. County wildlife site designations is a material consideration in planning; however, it is

important to note that designation of chalk streams would not give a guaranteed protection as it is a non-statutory designation. It is also sometimes complicated by a number of riparian owners that could be along the water course, and whether they are able to carry out the appropriate management.

In terms of future funding, there will be hopefully opportunities for landowners through the England Land Management scheme - known as Elms - which replaces the existing stewardship scheme. In terms of protection, the future requirement of the environment bill anticipated for autumn 21 for local authorities to identify and publish a local nature networks map should help. This will form part of the steps with you to the council and other partners conserving harmful natural environment. As part of this appropriate strategy for management is needed.

Sorry, last paragraph, sorry Chairman I was going to quick I can.

Links to the County Council Climate Change Action Plan and commitments of doubling nature will hopefully allow chalk streams and water bill, sorry, will link to the County Council's Climate Change Environment Strategy Action Plan, our commitment to doubling nature, and our interest in chalk streams and water availability. The flood team has been supporting water its resources East and Cambridgeshire water with the development of the Grantor Capturing Resilience Programme. We also previously physically supported River restoration led by the Wild Trout Trust on the River Shep's chalk stream.

Thank you, Chairman. Sorry I tried to get as much information in as I could.

Supplementary question from Indira Vadhia

Yes, I don't have a supplementary question. But thank you for the information Councillor Schumann. It was very comprehensive, and I'm pleased to hear that there's the quite specific criteria for chalk streams is being developed, so thank you.

Response from Councillor Josh Schumann, Chairman of Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Chairman. If I may, I just want to say that my full response will, I'm sure, be made available in the minutes. Thank you.

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

Question to the Council's Appointees on the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Scutt and Councillor Connor

Question from Councillor Whitehead:

Thank you Chair. It was mentioned earlier in the meeting, and we've certainly heard it on the news, that a significant amount of money has been withheld from the Combined Authority. I would like, therefore, to ask Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explain to us why that money has been withheld. Thank you.

Response from Councillor Scutt:

If I may, thank you Councillor Connor and thank you Councillor McGuire.

Yes, as Councillor Whitehead mentioned there has been media coverage of the question of £45 million. When the Combined Authority was established, a hundred million pounds was in the budget of the Combined Authority for housing within the whole of Cambridgeshire. At that time, also £70 million was in the budget for Cambridge City. The media has made allusions to the fact that the £45 million is no longer to be with the Combined Authority. £55 million was paid over to the Combined Authority and then the Combined Authority received a letter from the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government suggesting that there would be a delay in that £45 million coming. Subsequently, on the 15th of March, that is this Monday, when the Housing Committee had a meeting it was advised that the £45 million, a part of that hundred million, was not to come and that the Housing Plan that was drawn up under that original Combined Authority agreement would come to a conclusion in this month – that is 2021 - there would be no extension to 2022.

Now, I asked questions as a Member of the Scrutiny Committee and as the lead on housing at that meeting and those questions were, I expect, answered to a certain degree that it appears that the contention is that further monies will be coming, although it is unclear as to what they actually will consist of. But I did ask at that meeting what the Combined Authority had done in accordance with the way I read the Combined Authority agreement and the business case to seek alternative funds, or additional funds, to the government funds. In the executive summary of the business case, it has said that monies will include bringing together funding streams secured through the devolution agreement with other investments and funds secured through growth deals. Furthermore, under the commercial case, it said that the Combined Authority will act to bring together funding streams secured through the devolution agreement with other investments and the funds secured through growth deals. The Combined Authority agreement itself refers, in my view, and in clear clarity for me in the words, that action should have been taken to secure alternative sources of funding, but I was advised at that meeting that no such action has been taken. That means that the planning of housing for Cambridgeshire is certainly at risk.

And I simply want to conclude on this note: to compare it with the £70 million that the Cambridge City Council gained. Thirty new council homes have now been completed across eleven sites under the City Council programme. Seventy-five of these are net new homes, that is did not replace existing homes, which were on a redevelopment site. The Council currently has 401 new council rented homes being built on site with a further fifty starts expected by the 2021 financial year-end, sixteen starts are expected to fall within 2021 to 2022. Combining the projects together, City Council will have achieved the target of starting on-site, or completing, five hundred new

council homes a year ahead of schedule and working towards a deadline of March 2020. I simply set that out because it seems to me that it's clear that, as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we must pay attention clearly to what is happening on the Combined Authority

Point of order from Councillor Goldsack:

Point of order, please. Point of order, please. Are we not discussing matters of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee? Should these questions not be on that which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have sat on, rather than what is conjecture from a meeting that took place yesterday?

Response from Chairman:

That is the case. I personally was at it, so I was not able to interrupt and say that it was non-factual. I'm not aware of it, but I will ask Councillor Scutt to stick question that was asked of you with regard to Overview and Scrutiny. Thank you. Councillor Scutt?

Objection to point of order from Councillor Scutt:

Thank you, Chair. I seriously object to the contention that I'm conveying anything to this council that is factually incorrect.

Response from Chairman:

That is not the point though, Councillor Scutt. It is whether you're answering the question related to Overview and Scrutiny. Because we can all quote many facts, but not in the context of that particular Committee. So, could you stick to answering the question of that Committee before I move on to Cllr Connor and give him that opportunity. Thank you.

Objection to point of order from Councillor Scutt:

Perhaps, Chair, you might have listened to what...

Chairman McGuire response to Councillor Scutt:

I was.

Objection to point of order from Councillor Scutt:

To what Councillor Goldsack said. He stated that I was not stating facts, that I was stating something that was factually incorrect.

Time warning from Chairman McGuire to Councillor Scutt:

You're running out of time here, Cllr Scutt. Councillor Connor, do you wish to come in?

Response to time warning from Councillor Scutt:

No. I'm sorry, Chair may I just conclude?

Response to Councillor Scutt from Chairman McGuire:

I thought you had. I was hoping you had. Sorry.

Response to Chairman McGuire from Councillor Scutt:

Thank you, Chair.

Response to Councillor Scutt from Chairman McGuire:

I'll put my timer back another 15 seconds.

Response to Councillor Whitehead from Councillor Scutt:

Thank you, Chair. I want to conclude by saying that, as Members and as the housing lead on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is important for us to properly scrutinise what is happening at the Combined authority, and that £45 million is not coming to the Combined Authority by order of the minister for local government is a matter of serious concern and this council should take it seriously. Thank you, Chair.

Response to Councillor Whitehead from Councillor Connor:

Yeah, I'll just pick one thing, Chairman, I'm not going to carry on about it. I've no advance knowledge of your question, Councillor, but I will get back to you in the very near future with your answer your question, thank you.