

County Council – Minutes

Please note the meeting can be viewed on YouTube at the following link:
[Cambridgeshire County Council - Full Council Meeting 08/02/22 - YouTube](#)

Date: Tuesday 08 February 2022

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Present:

D Ambrose Smith	R Fuller	E Meschini
M Atkins	I Gardener	B Milnes
H Batchelor	N Gay	E Murphy
A Beckett	D Giles	L Nethsingha
K Billington	M Goldsack	K Prentice
C Boden	B Goodliffe	C Rae
A Bradnam	N Gough	T Sanderson
A Bulat	J Gowing	J Schumann
S Bywater	R Hathorn	N Shailer
D Connor	A Hay	A Sharp
S Corney	M Howell	P Slatter
A Costello	R Howitt	M Smith
S Count	S Hoy	S Taylor
P Coutts	S Kindersley (Vice-Chair)	F Thompson
H Cox Condron	J King	S Tierney
C Daunton	M King	S van de Ven
L Dupré	S King	A Whelan
S Ferguson	P McDonald	G Wilson
J French	M McGuire	

It was proposed by the Vice-Chair of the Council, Councillor Kindersley, and agreed unanimously, to suspend standing orders for Section 19.1 – Standing to Speak, Part 4.1, Council Procedure Rules, Part 4 Rules of Procedure, to enable Members to sit while speaking so that their voices could be picked up by the microphone system.

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors Bird, Criswell, Dew, Reynolds and D Schumann.

39. Election of Chair of Council

It was moved by Councillor Nethsingha, seconded by Councillor Meschini, that Councillor Ferguson be elected Chair of the County Council for the remainder of the municipal year.

It was also moved by Councillor Count, seconded by Councillor J Schumann, that Councillor McGuire be elected as Chair of the County Council for the remainder of the municipal year.

It was resolved by a majority by show of hands:

That Councillor Ferguson be elected Chair of the County Council for the period to the remainder of the municipal year.

Councillor Ferguson signed the statutory declaration of acceptance of office, took the Chair and thanked the Council for his election.

The Council welcomed back the former Chair, Councillor Giles, to the meeting following his recent period of illness.

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents in favour of Councillor Ferguson; Conservatives in favour of Councillor McGuire]

40. Minutes - 9 November 2021 and 25 January 2022

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 November 2021 and 25 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

41. Chair's announcements

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

42. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reported that the Monitoring Officer had exercised her discretion to grant a dispensation to all elected members of Cambridgeshire County Council taking part in the debate on the Council's Business Plan.

Councillor Boden declared a non-pecuniary interest regarding Agenda Item 11, as a member of the Audit Registration Committee for the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, and therefore would not be speaking or voting on the item.

43. Public Question Time

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

44. Petitions

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

45. Report on Urgent Decisions taken by the Chief Executive

It was moved by the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Kindersley, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Bulat, that the recommendations set out in the report on the Council agenda be approved.

It was resolved unanimously to note the urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

46. Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals for 2022-23 to 2026-27

It was proposed by the Chair of Council, Councillor Ferguson, seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Kindersley, and resolved unanimously to suspend any standing orders in connection with the Business Plan debate in order to accommodate a procedure agreed by the Council's Group Leaders.

It was moved by the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Nethsingha, seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Meschini that the recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee set out on pages 11 to 13 of the Council agenda be approved.

The Chair invited the Leaders of the Groups to make their opening statements on the Business Plan.

The Chair then opened the debate on all sections of the Business Plan and invited amendments to the overall budget proposals.

Councillor Count moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Boden, as set out in Appendix B.

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

[The voting record is included at Appendix C]

In opening the debate on the main Business Plan, the Chair invited all Policy and Service Committee Chairs to speak if they so wished.

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

1. Approve the Business Plan, including supporting budget, business cases, consultation responses and other material, in light of all the planning activities undertaken to date.
2. Following recommendations from Strategy & Resources Committee:
 - a) Approve the Service/Directorate budget allocations as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 3 of the Business Plan.
 - b) Approve a total county budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £926,974,000, including a levy of £9,684,976 payable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the delivery of Transport Services and a levy of £433,000 payable to the Environment Agency for flood and coastal services.
 - c) Approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £346,551,526.36 (to be received in equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995).
 - d) Approve a Council Tax increase for each Band of property, based on the number of "Band D" equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the Districts (235,811.9), reflecting a 3% ASC precept increase and a 1.99% increase in Basic Council Tax Precept:

Band	Ratio	Amount
A	6/9	£979.74
B	7/9	£1,143.03
C	8/9	£1,306.32
D	9/9	£1,469.61
E	11/9	£1,796.19
F	13/9	£2,122.77
G	15/9	£2,449.35
H	18/9	£2,939.22

- e) Approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Section 6 of the Business Plan including:
 - Commitments from schemes already approved;
 - Expenditure on new schemes in 2022-23 shown in summary in Section 2, Table 8.2 of the Business Plan.
- f) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Section 7 of the Business Plan, including:
 - i. The Council's policy on the making of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the repayment of debt, as required by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance & Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

- ii. The Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2022-23 (as required by the Local Government Act 2003).
 - iii. The Investment Strategy for 2022-23 and the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 3 of Section 7 of the Business Plan.
- 3. Approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Section 6 of the Business Plan including:
 - Commitments from schemes already approved,
 - Expenditure on new schemes in 2022-23 shown in summary in Section 2, Table 6.7 of the Business Plan.
- 4. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Section 7 of the Business Plan, including:
 - i. The Council's policy on the making of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the repayment of debt, as required by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance & Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
 - ii. The Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2022- 23 (as required by the Local Government Act 2003).
 - iii. The Investment Strategy for 2022-23 as required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) revised Guidance on Local Government Investments issued in 2018, and the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 3 of Section 7 of the Business Plan.
- 5. Authorise the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make technical revisions to the Business Plan, including the foregoing recommendations to the County Council, so as to take into account any changes deemed appropriate. This includes updated information on District Council Tax Base and Collection Funds, Business Rates forecasts and Collection Funds and any grant changes, as well as appending the agreed budget submitted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, in the County Council's role as the host authority.

[The voting record is included at Appendix D]

47. Item for determination from Strategy and Resources Committee

Treasury Management Report – Quarter Two Update 2021-22

It was moved by the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Nethsingha, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Meschini, that the recommendation from the Strategy and Resources Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

In response to a question from a Member, the Chief Finance Officer was asked to provide a written response detailing to what extent the figures had been subject to sensitivity analysis and stress testing in order to provide assurance in relation to the conclusions set out in the report.

Following discussion, it was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

Note the Treasury Management Quarter Two Report for 2021-22.

48. Item for determination from Environment and Green Investment Committee

Review of the Climate Change Strategy and Environment Strategy

It was moved by the Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, Councillor Dupré, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, Councillor Gay, that the recommendation from the Environment and Green Investment Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

The Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) was thanked for its contribution to the Green Investment Strategy.

Following discussion under Part 4 Rules of Procedure, Part 4.1 – Council Procedure Rules, paragraph 15.5 of the Constitution, more than 14 Members requested a recorded vote on this matter.

After further discussion, the following motion on being put to the vote was carried, as set out in the recorded vote in Appendix E.

Adopt the Draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy as Corporate Policy.

49. Item for determination from Audit and Accounts Committee

Arrangements for the appointment of external auditors from 2023-24 to 2027-28

It was moved by the Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Wilson, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Gay that the recommendation from the Audit and Accounts Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote, it was resolved unanimously, by show of hands, to:

Accept Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

50. Audit and Accounts Committee Annual Report 2020-21

The Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee, Councillor Wilson, moved receipt of the annual report of the Committee for 2020-21. He drew attention to section 3.2.2 of the draft Statement of Accounts, which should read 2019/20, and not 2020/21.

Council noted the report.

51. Appointments to Outside Bodies

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor Ferguson, seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Council, Councillor Kindersley, and agreed unanimously, to appoint Councillor Rae to replace Councillor Cox Condon on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

52. Questions

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

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

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

One written question was received under Council Procedure Rule 9.2., as set out in Appendix F.

Chair
15th March 2022

County Council – 8th February 2022

Chair's Announcements

People

Resignation of the Chair of Council, Councillor Derek Giles

The Chair of Cambridgeshire County Council Derek Giles has regrettably resigned from the role due to ill health. Councillor Giles has expressed the great honour of serving as Chair and paid tribute to the support he had received from officers, councillors and the Vice Chair Sebastian Kindersley. He was elected Chair of the Council in May 2021.

Retirement of the Chief Executive, Gillian Beasley, OBE

Gillian Beasley, OBE, Cambridgeshire County Council's Chief Executive since 2015 retired from the Council at the end of December after an illustrious 38-year career in local government. Gillian delayed her original plan to retire last October because of the pandemic.

Gillian is a solicitor by profession and was appointed Chief Executive of Peterborough City Council in 2002 and became joint Chief Executive of both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council in 2015. During her career Gillian has advised government on Children's Law, migration impacts, government housing and cohesion and served on a number of bodies and Commissions linked to these issues. She also led on a complex Child Sexual Exploitation case in Peterborough, which helped inform and shape future local government practice.

Gillian received an OBE in the Queens New Year's Honours list in 2009 for services to local government. She holds an honorary doctorate from Anglia Ruskin and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Retirement of the Executive Director for People and Communities, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn

After a 35-year career in local government, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Executive Director for People and Communities retired at the end of January 2022. Wendi began her career in Cambridgeshire in 1987 as a Residential Worker and went onto qualify as a Social Worker. After managing all the council's family support and adolescent care services, she left in 2004 to head up Children's Commissioning in Bedfordshire, before being appointed Director of Commissioning at Essex County Council. In 2012 she moved to Peterborough, and in 2017 took on the joint role across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as the Executive Director of People and Communities.

Acting Executive Director for People and Communities, Charlotte Black

Charlotte Black, currently Director of Adult Social Care, is acting Executive Director for People and Communities following the retirement of Wendi Ogle-Welbourn for at least 6 months from January 2022. Charlotte has worked in the NHS and managed children's services for seven years and

adults' services for eight years. Her career started in public health when she was appointed as an Executive Director of a Health Authority, after which she was appointed into a joint role working across four PCTs and the Local Authority.

Retirement of Director of Children's Services, Lou Williams

Lou Williams, Director of Children's Services has taken the difficult decision to take early retirement and plans to leave in February 2022. After very careful thinking, he has come to the view that both authorities now need a Director of Children's Services who is able to give a three-or four-year commitment as the Council manages post covid pressures and financial challenges, as well as grasp new opportunities, such as the Children and Maternity Collaborative as part of the Integrated Care System. He is clear that this length of time is too long for him personally, and that a person is needed who is able to commit to that period of time and who has the energy required to meet these challenges and opportunities.

Long Service Award – Democratic Services Manager

The Council presented the Democratic Services Manager, Michelle Rowe, with a Long Service Award following 25 years of service to the Council.

Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals for 2022-23 to 2026-27

Conservative Amendment – proposed by Councillor Count
(Additions in **bold** and deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

2. Following recommendations from Strategy & Resources Committee:

- ~~a) Approve the Service/Directorate budget allocations as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 3 of the Business Plan.~~
- ~~b) Approve a total county budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £926,974,000, including a levy of £9,684,976 payable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the delivery of Transport Services and a levy of £433,000 payable to the Environment Agency for flood and coastal services.~~
- ~~c) Approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £346,551,526.36 (to be received in equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995).~~
- ~~d) Approve a Council Tax increase for each Band of property, based on the number of "Band D" equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the Districts (235,811.9), reflecting a 3% ASC precept increase and a 1.99% increase in Basic Council Tax Precept:~~

Replace recommendations 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d as follows:

- a) Approve the Service/Directorate budget allocations as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 3 of the Business Plan, amended as follows:

£000	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Budget gap in draft business plan	0	17,396	22,737	16,782	18,337
Revise general reserves policy to 3% of budget	-6,878	6,878			
Revise Council Tax policy to 3% ASC Precept	6,579	258	267	257	270
P&E investment – flood modelling	100	-100			
Revised budget gap	-199	24,432	23,004	17,039	18,607

- b) Approve a total county budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £927,074,000, including a levy of £9,684,976 payable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the delivery of Transport Services and a levy of £433,000 payable to the Environment Agency for flood and coastal services.
- c) Approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £339,972,374.35 (to be received in equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995).

- d) Approve a 3% ASC precept increase for each Band of property, based on the number of “Band D” equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the Districts (235,800.2):

Band	Ratio	Amount
A	6/9	£961.14
B	7/9	£1,121.33
C	8/9	£1,281.52
D	9/9	£1,441.71
E	11/9	£1,762.09
F	13/9	£2,082.47
G	15/9	£2,402.85
H	18/9	£2,883.42

Approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Section 6 of the Business Plan including:

- Commitments from schemes already approved,
- Expenditure on new schemes in 2022-23 shown in summary in Section 2, Table 6.7 of the Business Plan.

Add new recommendations:

2.g) Approve a reserves policy that maintains a general reserve of 3% of gross non-schools expenditure.

- h) Commit that any additional highways maintenance grants that the Council receives for 2022/23, be ringfenced for additional expenditure on highways (its intended purpose), rather than repaying or replacing borrowing.
- i) Approve the allocation of £4m to enable provision for flood prevention works on a match-funding basis with other organisations, funded from the Just Transition Fund.
- j) Approve the allocation £100k for flood risk modelling and surface water mapping in a market town.

Add new recommendations

3. Note the supplementary information set out in this amendment document.
4. Authorise the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader & Deputy Leader of the Council, to make the necessary consequent changes from these amendments to the business plan documents.

Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals for 2022-23 to 2026-27

Recorded Vote for Conservative Amendment – proposed by Councillor Count

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote	COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote
AMBROSE-SMITH D	Con	X				HAY A	Con	X			
ATKINS M	Lib Dem		X			HOWELL M	Con	X			
BATCHELOR H	Lib Dem		X			HOWITT R	Lab		X		
BECKETT A	Lib Dem		X			HOY S	Con	X			
BILLINGTON K	Con	X				KINDERSLEY S	Lib Dem		X		
BIRD G	Lab				X	KING JONAS	Con	X			
BODEN C	Con	X				KING MARIA	Lib Dem		X		
BRADNAM A	Lib Dem		X			KING SIMON	Con	X			
BULAT A	Lab		X			MCDONALD P	Lib Dem		X		
BYWATER S	Con	X				MCGUIRE M	Con	X			
CONNOR D	Con	X				MESCHINI E	Lab		X		
CORNEY S	Con	X				MILNES B	Lib Dem		X		
COSTELLO A	Con	X				MURPHY E	Lib Dem		X		
COUNT S	Con	X				NETHSINGHA L	Lib Dem		X		
COUTTS P	Lib Dem		X			PRENTICE K	Con	X			
COX CONDRON H	Lab		X			RAE C	Lab		X		
CRISWELL S	Con				X	REYNOLDS K	Con				X
DAUNTON C	Lib Dem		X			SANDERSON T	Ind		X		
DEW D	Con				X	SCHUMANN D	Con				X
DUPRE L	Lib Dem		X			SCHUMANN J	Con	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		
GILES D	Ind		X			THOMPSON F	Lib Dem		X		
GOLDSACK M	Con	X				TIERNEY S	Con	X			
GOODLIFFE B	Lab		X			VAN DE VEN S	Lib Dem		X		
GOUGH N	Lib Dem		X			WHELAN A	Lib Dem		X		
GOWING J	Con	X				WILSON G	Lib Dem		X		
HATHORN R	Lib Dem		X			Total		11	17		2
Total		13	15		3	Complete Total		24	32		5

Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposals for 2022-23 to 2026-27

Recorded Vote for Motion

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote
AMBROSE-SMITH D	Con		X		
ATKINS M	Lib Dem	X			
BATCHELOR H	Lib Dem	X			
BECKETT A	Lib Dem	X			
BILLINGTON K	Con	X			
BIRD G	Lab				X
BODEN C	Con		X		
BRADNAM A	Lib Dem	X			
BULAT A	Lab	X			
BYWATER S	Con		X		
CONNOR D	Con		X		
CORNEY S	Con		X		
COSTELLO A	Con		X		
COUNT S	Con		X		
COUTTS P	Lib Dem	X			
COX CONDRON H	Lab	X			
CRISWELL S	Con				X
DAUNTON C	Lib Dem	X			
DEW D	Con				X
DUPRE L	Lib Dem	X			
FERGUSON S	Ind	X			
FRENCH J	Con		X		
FULLER R	Con		X		
GARDENER I	Con		X		
GAY N	Lab	X			
GILES D	Ind	X			
GOLDSACK M	Con		X		
GOODLIFFE B	Lab	X			
GOUGH N	Lib Dem	X			
GOWING J	Con		X		
HATHORN R	Lib Dem	X			
Total		16	12		3

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote
HAY A	Con		X		
HOWELL M	Con		X		
HOWITT R	Lab	X			
HOY S	Con		X		
KINDERSLEY S	Lib Dem	X			
KING JONAS	Con		X		
KING MARIA	Lib Dem	X			
KING SIMON	Con		X		
MCDONALD P	Lib Dem	X			
MCGUIRE M	Con		X		
MESCHINI E	Lab	X			
MILNES B	Lib Dem	X			
MURPHY E	Lib Dem	X			
NETHSINGHA L	Lib Dem	X			
PRENTICE K	Con		X		
RAE C	Lab	X			
REYNOLDS K	Con				X
SANDERSON T	Ind	X			
SCHUMANN D	Con				X
SCHUMANN J	Con		X		
SHAILER N	Lab	X			
SHARP A	Con		X		
SLATTER P	Lib Dem	X			
SMITH M	Con		X		
TAYLOR S	Ind	X			
THOMPSON F	Lib Dem	X			
TIERNEY S	Con		X		
VAN DE VEN S	Lib Dem	X			
WHELAN A	Lib Dem	X			
WILSON G	Lib Dem	X			
Total		17	11		2
Complete Total		33	23		5

Item for determination from Environment and Green Investment Committee Review of the Climate Change Strategy

COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote	COUNCILLOR	Party	For	Against	Abstain	Absent / No Vote
AMBROSE-SMITH D	Con	X				HAY A	Con	X			
ATKINS M	Lib Dem	X				HOWELL M	Con	X			
BATCHELOR H	Lib Dem	X				HOWITT R	Lab	X			
BECKETT A	Lib Dem	X				HOY S	Con		X		
BILLINGTON K	Con				X	KINDERSLEY S	Lib Dem	X			
BIRD G	Lab				X	KING JONAS	Con	X			
BODEN C	Con		X			KING MARIA	Lib Dem	X			
BRADNAM A	Lib Dem	X				KING SIMON	Con	X			
BULAT A	Lab	X				MCDONALD P	Lib Dem	X			
BYWATER S	Con	X				MCGUIRE M	Con	X			
CONNOR D	Con	X				MESCHINI E	Lab	X			
CORNEY S	Con	X				MILNES B	Lib Dem	X			
COSTELLO A	Con	X				MURPHY E	Lib Dem	X			
COUNT S	Con	X				NETHSINGHA L	Lib Dem	X			
COUTTS P	Lib Dem	X				PRENTICE K	Con	X			
COX CONDRON H	Lab	X				RAE C	Lab	X			
CRISWELL S	Con				X	REYNOLDS K	Con				X
DAUNTON C	Lib Dem	X				SANDERSON T	Ind	X			
DEW D	Con				X	SCHUMANN D	Con				X
DUPRE L	Lib Dem	X				SCHUMANN J	Con	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			
GILES D	Ind	X				THOMPSON F	Lib Dem	X			
GOLDSACK M	Con	X				TIERNEY S	Con		X		
GOODLIFFE B	Lab	X				VAN DE VEN S	Lib Dem	X			
GOUGH N	Lib Dem	X				WHELAN A	Lib Dem				X
GOWING J	Con	X				WILSON G	Lib Dem	X			
HATHORN R	Lib Dem	X				Total		25	2		3
Total		26	1		4	Complete Total		51	3		7

County Council – 8 February 2022

Written Question under Council Procedure Rule 9.2 1.

Question from Councillor Simon Bywater:

Could the Chair of the Children and Young People Committee advise Council whether it still plans to invest and continue the very successful Care Leavers Mentoring programme. Having fully engaged in the programme myself over the past 18 months (as a mentor) I have seen the huge benefits this has had for our care leavers in Cambridgeshire.

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

I would like to begin by thanking Councillor Bywater for his question, and for his commitment in providing mentoring to one of our young people leaving care through this scheme.

The mentoring scheme was introduced as a pilot in January 2020, with an aim to support young people leaving care to build the skills they need in order to successfully enter employment. The scheme linked young people leaving care with business mentors who would be able to develop their confidence and improve their skills in a variety of relevant areas, develop their career aspirations and focus on the steps they need to take to achieve these.

The project was called 'Reach High, Cambridgeshire' and initially involved 10 young people leaving care. The pilot scheme was delivered in partnership with Essex Community Development and was initially intended to operate for a year, with an evaluation of outcomes to follow.

As with many things in life, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted this timetable, and the evaluation of the scheme needed to broaden to take into account the necessary move away from face to face work to virtual and telephone-based mentoring.

The impact of the pilot has now been evaluated, however. Of the 10 young people who initially began the programme, 8 remained throughout. Mentors were identified from a variety of different backgrounds, and matched by the provider.

Feedback from young people leaving care has been entirely positive; young people felt valued, and described developing confidence and a renewed focus on reaching their longer term life goals.

These positive findings have resulted in a decision in principle to continue with the programme. Initiatives such as these are an important element of our offer to young people leaving care. We are now in the process of agreeing the scope and operation for the continuation of the pilot.

Once again, I would like to thank Councillor Bywater's contribution to the pilot programme and his support to the young person concerned.