

County Council – Minutes

Please note the meeting can be viewed on YouTube at the following link:

[Cambridgeshire County Council Full Council Meeting, 19th July 2022](#)

Date: Tuesday 19 July 2022

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 15:11 p.m.

Present:

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

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors P Coutts, R Fuller, S Hoy, M King, P McDonald, B Milnes, K Prentice, S Taylor, S Tierney, A Whelan and G Wilson.

78. Minutes – 10 May 2022 and the Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The action log was noted, which included a number of comments for investigation.

79. Chair's Announcements

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

80. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

81. Public Question Time

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

82. Petitions

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

83. Items for determination from Policy and Resources Committees

(a) Strategy and Resources Committee

Treasury Management Report – Quarter Four 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 recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

Following discussion, it was resolved by majority to:

Note the Treasury Management Quarter Four Outturn Report for 2021/22.

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

(b) Environment and Green Investment Committee Nature and Climate Change Declaration

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 recommendations from the Environment and Green Investment Committee, as set out on the Council agenda, be approved.

Following discussion, it was resolved by majority to:

- a) Agree to sign the Nature and Climate Change Declaration; and
- b) Endorse the Climate and Ecology Bill (2022).

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

84. Structure of the Corporate Leadership Team

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

Following discussion, it was resolved by majority to:

- a) Approve the revised structure of the Corporate Leadership Team and senior management structure of the Council, including the statutory officer roles of Section 151 Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer.
- b) Delegate authority to the Staffing and Appeals Committee, advised by the Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Human Resources to proceed with appointing to new or changed chief officer roles within the structure.
- c) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, advised by the Assistant Director of Human Resources, to proceed with appointing to new or changed roles below chief officer level, in accordance with the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules and associated policies and procedures.
- d) Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair 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: Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents in favour; Conservatives against.]

85. Delegation of statutory function to determine an application to register a public right of way across County boundary

It was moved by the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Beckett, and seconded by the Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Shailer, that the recommendations as set out in the report on the Council agenda be approved.

It was resolved unanimously that:

- a) Council approve the discharge of its function in respect of this application by Norfolk County Council with the provisos set out at 2.5 of the report; and
- b) Cambridgeshire County Council share the administrative costs of publicising any Order and of a venue for holding a public inquiry as set out at 3.1 of the report.

86. Appointments to Outside Bodies - Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor Ferguson, seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Kindersley, and agreed unanimously to:

Appoint Councillor Daunton as a Liberal Democrat representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly.

87. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10

a) Motion from Councillor Hilary Cox Condron

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Cox Condron and seconded by Councillor Bulat.

The Council notes that:

- Cambridgeshire residents are constantly exposed to paid promotion of activities or products which are potentially harmful for their mental and/or physical health and the environment they live in. These include, but are not limited to, junk food, alcohol, gambling and most polluting forms of transport (e.g. SUVs, fossil fuel companies).
- There is precedent for banning harmful product advertising in the context of public health. Most notably, most types of tobacco advertising were banned in 2003, including in public spaces such as bus shelters.
- Restricting the advertising and sponsorship of harmful products is not the same as banning the products themselves.
- Cambridgeshire County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and thus any action to minimise the negative impact on the environment, and to promote health and wellbeing for its residents, is urgent and should be welcomed.
- The Council has an ethical policy but does not yet specifically exclude junk food or fossil fuels, although does refer to a general exclusion with anything that 'appears to conflict with the Council's wider promotion of healthy and active lifestyles'.
- In response to a public question at the 22 July 2021 Cambridge City Council meeting, the Executive Councillor confirmed that the City Council has an interest in an aged contract relating to the supply of bus shelters. There is opportunity to work with the County Council to join contracts for other street assets, such as roundabouts and the County Council's own few bus shelters, and the City Council is in favour of considering an ethical advertising policy with them. Similar contexts might apply in other District Councils, thus County and District collaboration is key on this matter.
- The Council currently has income targets relating to the sale of advertising and sponsorship opportunities.

The Council welcomes that:

- The Greater London Authority (GLA), which controls Transport for London (TFL) property, were able to enact a Healthier Food Advertising Policy in 2018 prohibiting High Fat, Sugar or Salt (HFSS) food advertising on TFL property.
- Some councils, such as Bristol, have recently reviewed their ethical advertising policies. For instance, Bristol City Council, in its Partnerships and Collaboration Policy, does not permit advertising and/or sponsorship that contains, implies and suggests any of the following: "Promotion or availability of foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and/or sugar (HFSS) as defined by the Department of Health and Social Care's nutrient profiling model, without exceptions. This includes advertisements where there is a range of food/drink featured, some of which is HFSS." and "Promotion or availability of

alcoholic drinks. This includes advertisements where there is a range of drinks featured, some of which are alcoholic.”

- Some councils already passed motions on these issues. For instance, North Somerset County Council passed a motion in 2020 to review and strengthen the Council’s Low Carbon Advertising Policies. Norwich City Council passed a motion in 2021 in support of banning advertising of environmentally damaging products.

The Council expresses concern that:

- Some advertising of environmentally damaging products and junk food in particular is actively undermining the Council’s priorities in public health and environmental policies.
- This undermines the work of schools, nurseries, children’s centres and other organisations who are investing in healthy eating programmes, citizenship education and ensuring a healthy food environment inside their gates.
- Advertising is insidious in places where young people congregate e.g. near parks, sports grounds, etc and we need to ensure that promotion of physical exercise and an active lifestyle is not undermined by junk food advertising.

The Council is recommended to ask Strategy and Resources Committee to:

- Consider phasing out all forms of junk food advertising in County Council assets, such as roundabouts. The Council will aim to instead use the advertising space to promote health promoting products, which may mitigate any loss of income.
- Publish an advertising strategy that includes the Council’s position on junk food, and consideration to environmentally damaging products (including industrially farmed animal products) in the context of the Council’s net zero strategy, in addition to the exclusions currently included within the policy - such as gambling, alcohol and violence.
- Investigate the possibility of a County wide Low Carbon Policy for advertising and sponsorship, and model any resulting financial impact.

The Council is also recommended to:

- Work collaboratively with District Councils to have a joined-up approach to this issue via the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board, given that Districts have responsibility for applying national planning policy on advertising planning restrictions.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretaries of States for Health and Social Care, and Digital, Culture, Media and Sport asking to consider a ban on junk food advertising nationally in council owned spaces and public spaces more broadly.
- Work collaboratively with the Local Government Association to promote best practice in this area.

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

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

b) Motion from Councillor Mark Goldsack

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

A countywide approach to safety buffer zones for 30/40mph streets from National speed limit approach roads

This Council notes that:

- **safety on Cambridgeshire's roads is of paramount importance to the Council and to the public.**
- during the latest Local Highway ~~Initiative~~ **Improvement** (LHI) application campaign a ~~very~~ high percentage of applications were requesting 40mph buffer zones on roads accessing their local town, village, or community 30mph areas.

This Council acknowledges that:

- the LHI scheme does offer our communities the chance to request changes and improvements to the highway system, but that the application scheme can be cumbersome, expensive, and limited in terms of what a community can do, especially in time.
- ~~— Parish and Town councils, or local community applicants, must financially contribute to desired areas of need and want, and yet statistics are showing that a collective desire for buffers means that doing one per parish per year is unfair, and unsafe for our residents.~~
- **buffer zones are popular, but their implementation is slowed by limited council resource, the requirement for applicants to contribute funding, and the limit to one application per applicant per annum.**
- 40Mmph buffer zones that have been implemented across the County via the LHI scheme ~~provide proof that the scheme enhances~~ **appear to enhance** community safety by slowing down traffic and supporting pedestrians and cyclists in those areas.
- the county council has a duty to protect the population, and ~~this is~~ **buffer zones are** a positive step to further doing so.
- ~~— the importance of taking responsibility for proven community safety improvements from a once per year LHI application process to the heart of the Council.~~

This Council welcomes:

- **the review of the LHI scheme already under way.**
- **the work being done by the Vision Zero Partnership on a speed management strategy.**

This Council therefore requests that:

- a report be produced for a future **meeting of the** Highways and Transport Committee **on principles for the location of buffer zones, on how the process for local applications can be simplified and promoted to applicants, and on options for facilitating the installation of buffer zones where locally supported, whether through the LHI process or by other means.** ~~detailing a review of all National Speed Limit access roads that lead into 30MPH road inhabited areas. It should include:~~
 - ~~— a review of current speed policy and process.~~
 - ~~— the possible cost and process associated with further speed reductions on village approaches (based on worked up examples) as well as the possible safety outcomes that could result from scheme implementation.~~
 - ~~— an outline of a programme initiation document showing the time, cost and quality outcome elements of this scheme detailing how the approach should be offered to the local councils and if they accept, how they should be rolled out and the timescales involved.~~
- **meanwhile the current LHI Working Group be asked to consider how requests for buffer zones could be more effectively met within the LHI process.**

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

c) Motion from Councillor Steve Count

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Count and seconded by Councillor J King.

Core purpose:

To raise governance concerns and highlight the potential dangers of a politically aligned Audit and Accounts Committee Chair and Committee.

The Council notes that:

- The joint administration took over control of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in May 2021 and led by the Liberal Democrat leader Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, it made significant changes to the committee structure and subsequently significant changes to the constitution.
- The joint administration has undertaken a peer review, which covered many strategic corporate areas and some specific areas of concern.
- New governance arrangements were not included in the peer review and more recently the Chief Executive Stephen Moir, with the full backing of all group leaders has instigated a review of governance.
- There are many issues new and old which have already been and continue to feed into that review in an attempt to improve governance for residents affected by decisions made at the Council.
- The Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee is appointed by full Council, which has often appointed a chair of a different political persuasion than the leading party in order

to instil independence, robust challenge and confidence from the public that the committee was truly independent.

The Council acknowledges that:

- This organisation has a revenue budget in excess of £700m a year and has statutory responsibilities placed on it regarding the lives of its residents. It is therefore essential that its Audit and Accounts Committee is appropriately effective.
- For an effective Audit and Accounts Committee to function, the Committee itself, the internal auditor and external auditor must all have a real, and apparent independence that everyone has confidence in.
- Some authorities have appointed independent chairs and independent members, with pre-requisites for membership. These pre-requisites can also help address any imbalances in fair representation, which are not addressed by the Councillor membership of the committee. This Council expresses concern that:
- The current appointed Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee is a Member of the Joint Administration.
- This alignment of political ideologies, in such an important position of influence as the Chair of Audit and Accounts Committee, weakens the concept that the Committee is truly independent of influence and has the potential to weaken good governance and good decision making.
- The confidence of the public and the press may be diminished when it examines this arrangement. This can be further exacerbated when the voting structure is politically proportional, meaning the committee itself is politically aligned to the political leadership, who are performing decision making.
- A further weakness can occur in audit and accounts committees, when the pool of councillors from which members of the committee can be chosen, have insufficient financial and process experience to deliver effective scrutiny challenge.

This Council therefore requests that the Chief Executive as part of the governance review's examinations and recommendations includes the following:

- Examines the effectiveness and independence of the Audit and Accounts Committee
- A recommendation for effective chairing of Audit and Accounts Committee meetings
- A recommendation for creating a more independent non-political led committee
- Takes account of both the real potential, as well as the perception of potential, for political partisanship to influence the committee
- Addresses the potential for a committee not having a pool of members able to provide sufficiently robust challenge or diversity of relevant experience, knowledge and ability.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives and one Labour in favour; Liberal Democrats, eight Labour and Independents against. Following the meeting, Councillor Meschini confirmed she had voted in favour in error.]

d) Motion from Councillor Ros Hathorn

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

This Council notes that active travel infrastructure plays a vital role in:

- Connecting communities;
- Providing new opportunities for individuals in terms of employment, education, caring and leisure;
- Encouraging a culture of active travel which can lower childhood obesity levels and improve adult health;
- Providing new choices for those who do not have a car including giving greater independence to those under the age of 17
- Helping the county reach its net zero target of 2045.

The Council acknowledges that:

- As more active travel infrastructure is built it will have growing maintenance costs.
- Government Department for Transport (DfT) funding is provided based on the DfT Highway Maintenance funding formula. Local authorities make the decisions on where to spend this money across the whole network, In Cambridgeshire these decisions are based on the condition of the asset and the adopted Highway Operational Standards.
- The DfT does not make specific reference to the significance of active travel or include it explicitly within their funding formula, putting pressure on local authorities to accommodate a growing network of new generation active travel routes.
- Local Authority maintenance budgets are under increasing pressure to balance the numerous challenges across a changing network.
- There is no commitment to or indication that the government will make an explicit inclusion of active travel infrastructure in the DfT maintenance block funding formula in the future.
- Active travel needs new funding models which will both maintain the active travel infrastructure in place and support the delivery of really good new schemes.
- We have high active travel ambitions, and policy to support its delivery, it is essential that we use the planning process to its best effect to deliver on our ambitions across the county.

- Consideration of the maintenance requirements for active travel infrastructure is currently being reviewed as part of the Highways Operational Standards review. This motion seeks to support not undermine that work by demonstrating that funding to support active travel is supported by the full council.
- Some schemes, however, will be finalised before that review is complete.

This Council therefore:

- Asks the Highways and Transport service to prioritise developing active travel specific maintenance measures within the Highways Operational Standards (HOS) and explore ways in which ongoing maintenance requirements can be removed as a barrier to good scheme design.
- Asks the Highways and Transport service to undertake a review of the highway hierarchy used to deliver the asset management maintenance programme to ensure it reflects active travel growth and the ambitions of the council.
- Supports Active Travel England's talk of a 'new golden age of walking and cycling' Active Travel England update, and asks the Chief Executive to write to the Department of Transport and Active Travel England to:
 - o Outline the Council's concerns that councils' will not be able to deliver the active travel infrastructure necessary for this without a commitment from government to fund the maintenance of an expanding network of ambitious new generation cycleways and footways;
 - o Lobby for explicit inclusion of active travel infrastructure in the DfT maintenance block funding formula.
 - o Lobby for active travel to be included as a priority within the Highway Maintenance Incentive fund.
- Agrees to fully utilise the planning process to secure the highest quality developer infrastructure to meet the ambitions and aspirations of Cambridgeshire and agrees to strive for a more ambitious approach to schemes being developed currently so it can deliver better active travel schemes earlier.

Councillor Goldsack moved an amendment seconded by Councillor Sharp, as follows (Additions in bold):

This Council notes that active travel infrastructure plays a vital role in:

- connecting communities
- providing new opportunities for individuals in terms of employment, education, caring and leisure.
- encouraging a culture of active travel which can lower childhood obesity levels and improve adult health.
- providing new choices for those who do not have a car including giving greater independence to those under the age of 17.

- helping the county reach its net zero target of 2045.

The Council acknowledges that:

- as more active travel infrastructure is built it will have growing maintenance costs.
- Government Department for Transport (DfT) funding is provided based on the DfT Highway Maintenance funding formula. Local authorities make the decisions on where to spend this money across the whole network, In Cambridgeshire these decisions are based on the condition of the asset and the adopted Highway Operational Standards.
- the DfT does not make specific reference to the significance of active travel or include it explicitly within their funding formula, putting pressure on local authorities to accommodate a growing network of new generation active travel routes.
- Local Authority maintenance budgets are under increasing pressure to balance the numerous challenges across a changing network.
- there is no commitment to or indication that the Government will make an explicit inclusion of active travel infrastructure in the DfT maintenance block funding formula in the future.
- active travel needs new funding models which will both maintain the active travel infrastructure in place and support the delivery of really good new schemes.
- we have high active travel ambitions, and policy to support its delivery, it is essential that we use the planning process to its best effect to deliver on our ambitions across the County.
- consideration of the maintenance requirements for active travel infrastructure is currently being reviewed as part of the Highways Operational Standards review. This motion seeks to support not undermine that work by demonstrating that funding to support active travel is supported by the full Council.
- some schemes, however, will be finalised before that review is complete.

This Council therefore:

- asks the Highways and Transport service to prioritise developing active travel specific maintenance measures within the Highways Operational Standards (HOS) and explore ways in which ongoing maintenance requirements can be removed as a barrier to good scheme design.
- asks the Highways and Transport service to undertake a review of the highway hierarchy used to deliver the asset management maintenance programme to ensure it reflects active travel growth and the ambitions of the Council **but only**
 - a) **where this activity does nothing to potentially harm the Asset Management Strategy funding approach, as any amendment to this could impact negatively the funding received for Cambridgeshire County Council.**
 - b) **where areas of little or no active travel exists, such as rural villages with limited if any bus or rail service, these residents are not negatively**

impacted by a disproportional spend on county highway maintenance in areas that can benefit from Active Travel campaigns.

- supports Active Travel England's talk of a 'new golden age of walking and cycling' [Active Travel England update](#), and asks the Chief Executive to write to the Department of Transport and Active Travel England to:
 - o outline the Council's concerns that councils' will not be able to deliver the active travel infrastructure necessary for this without a commitment from government to fund the maintenance of an expanding network of ambitious new generation cycleways and footways;
 - o lobby for explicit inclusion of active travel infrastructure in the DfT maintenance block funding formula,
 - o lobby for active travel to be included as a priority within the Highway Maintenance Incentive fund.
- agrees to fully utilise the planning process to secure the highest quality developer infrastructure to meet the ambitions and aspirations of Cambridgeshire and agrees to strive for a more ambitious approach to schemes being developed currently so it can deliver better active travel schemes earlier.

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

[Voting pattern: Conservatives in favour; Liberal Democrats, Labour and two Independents against; and one Independent abstained.]

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

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

e) Motion from Councillor Alex Beckett

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Beckett and seconded by Councillor Bulat.

Problem pavement parking within our urban environments is a constant problem. It obstructs free passage and creates a hostile environment for many people particularly the most vulnerable in society with visual or mobility impairments. It creates a safety hazard where pushchairs are forced into the road to avoid a parked vehicle. A confused.com survey of 2000 adults found that 72% had been forced into the road to avoid a car parked on the pavement and 44% had felt unsafe because of this. A YouGov poll by Living Streets found a staggering 87% of parents with children aged 4-11 had to step into the road due to a parked vehicle.

While in some areas due to the width of the highway, pavement parking is difficult to avoid without removing all parking, there are large areas where there is simply no reason to park on the pavement and where a lack of enforcement is abused by antisocial drivers. Local authorities can restrict pavement parking by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The most direct route to this within Cambridgeshire County Council is by means of an Local Highway Initiative (LHI) bid however these are often overloaded and forced to consider a

small area. There is no coherent strategy within LHI bids. A concerted effort across extended areas would reduce pressure on the LHI programme and deliver cost efficiencies while presenting a coherent message to residents about how seriously we take this issue. With a TRO in place enforcement can be completed by civil parking inspectors in areas where this is delegated.

This Council therefore notes that:

- Parking on the pavement is a persistent problem and causes serious safety issues for the disabled, damages our pavements and prevents access for pedestrians.
- Whilst in some areas we may support formalised pavement parking, there are areas where we would seek to prevent it, and where a lack of enforcement is abused by antisocial drivers.
- Pavement parking can be prohibited via a Traffic Regulation Order and then enforced by civil parking enforcement. However, this can be expensive and there is currently no way to implement this outside the already overburdened Local Highway Initiative Scheme.
- There is a Bill to amend the law relating to parking on verges and footways in England outside of Greater London and in Wales, which will make it an offence to park on pavements however timescales or success are unknown and as currently drafted will not resolve all issues:

The bill as proposed [Pavement Parking Bill](#)

- Obviously if this is successful it will save the cost of multiple TROs, and will avoid the challenges associated with displaced parking, but we do not know if/when this will be introduced or if it will go far enough to prevent problem parking in all areas.

This Council therefore:

- Asks the highways department to prepare a paper for Strategy and Resources Committee proposing a group of pilot areas in Cambridge City for TRO implementation, outlining the costs required to implement.
- Asks Strategy and Resources Committee to assess this paper and provide a budget for implementation and enforcement of this work to prevent informal pavement parking within the city.
- Asks Highways and Transport Committee to assess the impact of this trial upon its implementation.
- If successful, ask the highways department to expand this work and bring a further paper to Highways and Transport Committee for all urban areas within Cambridgeshire with informal pavement parking, when it is appropriate to do so (mindful that Civil Parking Enforcement powers are needed to locally enforce the TRO).

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

[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour, nine Conservatives and Independents in favour; three Conservative abstained; and seven Conservatives against.]

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

Six questions were submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9.1 of the Council's Constitution attached at Appendix B.

(b) Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 9.2)

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

Chair
18th October 2022

County Council – 19th July 2022

Chair's Announcements

People

Former County Councillor Mike Rouse

It is with regret that the Chair reports the death of former County Councillor Mike Rouse, who represented the Ely North and East Division on behalf of the Conservative Party from 2013 to 2017.

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

Former County Councillor Margaret Hunter

It is with regret that the Chair reports the death of former County Councillor Margaret Hunter, who represented the Melbourn Division on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Party from 1993 to 1999.

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

Former County Councillor Robin Martlew

It is with regret that the Chair reports the death of former County Councillor Robin Martlew, who represented the Caxton Division from 1967 to 1970, and the Comberton Division from 1993 to 2005 on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Party.

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

Meredith Hudson

It is with deep regret that the Chair reports the recent sudden death of Meredith Hudson. Meredith worked in many roles within the 0-19 service including education capital, admissions and business support not to mention her roles for the wider council in the registration service. Meredith's parents also worked for many years at the Council.

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

Alysia Ramsdale

It is also with deep regret that the Chair reports the recent sudden death of Alysia Ramsdale. Alysia worked for the Council since 2008 within the Children's Early Help Supporting Families team and Human Resources.

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

Awards

Queen's Jubilee Birthday Honours

The Council sends its congratulations to two former colleagues Christine May, Head of Libraries at Bradford Metropolitan District Council, and Susan Wills, Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning and Culture, Surrey County Council who have both been awarded MBEs for services to Public Libraries.

Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The Council's Library@home volunteers are one of three voluntary groups in Cambridgeshire who have been awarded with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. It aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to benefit their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate The Queen's Golden Jubilee. Recipients are announced each year on 2nd June, the anniversary of The Queen's Coronation.

Service Developments

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Health and Wellbeing Boards are required, as stated in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to produce Health & Wellbeing Strategies. The last two years have required the whole system to focus on tackling the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy was written and consulted upon, it was not launched due to the pandemic. A new approach is needed to reflect the significant infrastructure system changes and challenges.

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed to a single plan and set of priorities across the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Integrated Care System (ICS). This means that there will not be a separate overall long-term health and wellbeing strategy for local government, nor for the local NHS although there will however be integrated plans for service delivery. This "One Plan" approach is a first for our area and demonstrates a commitment of all partners to working together towards shared goals, while retaining organisations' different areas of expertise and statutory responsibilities.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS) must be informed by Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA). For the purpose of this particular strategy, the Covid-19 Impact Assessment fulfils the function of the JSNA, summarising the joint work we have done across local government, the NHS and partners to understand the emerging impact of Covid-19. In addition, the JSNA core data set provides understanding of health and wellbeing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents.

An engagement plan that incorporates the Joint HWBS and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Strategy is at the early stages of discussion and development with partners across the ICS. The first meeting of the Joint HWB/ICP is scheduled for July 2022 where the proposed engagement plan will be set out for approval along with a formal consultation period for the Joint HWB Strategy.

Messages

Cambridge American Cemetery - Memorial Day Ceremony

The Chair was honoured to attend and represent Cambridgeshire County Council at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Cambridge American Cemetery. This year marked the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the US troops in the U.K. during World War 2.

Platinum Jubilee – Cambridge Beacon Lighting

The Chair was pleased to be invited to the Cambridge Beacon Lighting on 2nd June, alongside Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant, Mrs Julie Spence. The celebration marked the start of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Raising the flag for Armed Forces Day

It was a great privilege for the Chair to raise the flag at New Shire Hall for Armed Forces Day. The flag was flown for the week leading up to the Armed Forces Day at both New Shire Hall and Shire Hall, Cambridge. This paid tribute to our UK's Servicemen and women.

The sad passing of Councillor Mike Rouse

The Chair and Vice Chair, Councillor Kindersley attended the memorial service of Councillor Mike Rouse. Councillor Rouse is remembered with great fondness here at Cambridgeshire County Council, having worked at Soham Village College for 35 years, and then serving as a County Councillor.

University of Cambridge Conferment and Celebration of Honorary Degrees by The Chancellor, The Lord Sainsbury of Turville

The Chair was pleased to be invited by the University of Cambridge to the Conferment and Celebration of Honorary Degrees by The Chancellor, The Lord Sainsbury of Turville. The Conferment and Celebration of Honorary Degrees is one of the highest accolades the University can bestow upon people who have made an outstanding achievement in their respective fields.

Cambridgeshire County Day

It was an honour for the Chair to attend the first Cambridgeshire County Day, hosted by the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Julie Spence. The Chair was honoured to be invited to the Garden Party where he was able to meet and thank the people of Cambridgeshire who had been nominated to attend because of their involvement in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wisbech Green Social Emotional and Mental Health School (SEMH) Groundbreaking Ceremony

It was a privileged for the Chair to attend and perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Wisbech SEMH school. The ceremony marked the start of construction on the new school. The Wisbech Green SEMH school will accommodate 60 young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

New Shire Hall Official opening

The Chair was honoured to be a part of the official opening and plaque unveiling of New Shire Hall. The building was officially opened by the Chair, alongside, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant,

former Chair of the Council, Councillor Mac McGuire, and pupils from Alconbury C of E primary school and staff. This day was a momentous occasion enjoyed by all.

Commonwealth Games 2022 Baton Relay in Cambridge

The Deputy Mayor of Cambridge invited Vice Chair, Cllr Kindersley to attend the Commonwealth Games 2022 Baton Relay in Cambridge on Saturday 9th July.

Kings Dyke Opening

The Chair was privileged to be invited to the official opening of the King's Dyke bridge, connecting Peterborough and Whittlesey over the Peterborough – Ely railway line. The new bridge has been named 'the Ralph Butcher Causeway' in honour of the Fenland District Councillor who campaigned for it to be built in the 1970s.

Heart and Lung Research Institute official opening

Vice Chair Councillor Kindersley attended the official opening of the Heart and Lung Research Institute building on the biomedical campus in Cambridge. Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester officially opened the building.

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

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

Question from Councillor J King:

As in the minutes on today's agenda, at the Full Council meeting on the 10th of May this year, the Leader of the Council advised that the Combined Authority had lost £22m of Government money for the Green Homes Grant to retrofit homes to improve energy efficiency. It's now clear that substantially more than that has been lost.

Can the Leader confirm that it's now £31m of Local Authority delivery Green Homes Grant monies that will have to be returned by the Combined Authority to Government? And, whether or not tens of millions of pounds of the final phase of the Sustainable Warmth Programme, which finishes on the 31st of March 2023, will also consequently be lost?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you. You want me to take them separately? Yes. Okay.

So, this is the LAD 2 Programme funding and I think the first thing I want to do is to challenge the use of the word 'lost' in this context, in that any money that goes, that is not spent on this programme, goes back to the Treasury. Now, I am very sad if that happens because I would much rather that the money was spent in this programme, and the sooner it is spent the better. However, it is not money that is 'lost' to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

This is money- So this, the money that is being referred to in this question, is, I believe, the LAD 2 Programme - which is managed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as an energy hub on the behalf of the whole of the East of England. That programme was agreed to in November last year, I believe, and a very large amount of money, I think - if I haven't got all the numbers exactly correct somebody will be able to look them up - but I think in excess of £70m was handed over by the Treasury to the CPCA in order to do retrofitting in houses within a very, very short time scale. No other places took on the level of spending that the CPCA took on. I think, with the benefit of hindsight, it was unwise of the CPCA to take on that level of spending because they are not going to be able to spend it and there is no question at all that they are not going to be able to deliver the extent of the programme that they took money from the Treasury to do, and that means that money will go back to the Treasury.

Now, I'm not able to say at this point whether that amount is £31m pounds. I wouldn't be very surprised if it was higher than that, the amount that goes back to the Treasury.

Sorry, I am about to run out of money, however, what I will say - time not money -

What I will say, is that every single penny which is spent is a good thing and it is worth having the programme to spend the money. Every penny that goes back will be a shame. That will be a pity. It would have been better to spend it. But it is very good that we have spent as much as we have.

Supplementary question from Councillor J King:

As I understand it, the West Midlands have also received substantial money for LAD 2 as well, and they have spent all of theirs and will be receiving additional funds for their success.

So, why is it that the Combined Authority has failed to do the same?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

So, I believe that the amount of the West Midlands took on was very significantly smaller, but as I say, I don't have the exact figures in my head.

Question from Councillor Corney:

Thank you for the answer you've just given, because that was going to be part of my question to you anyway. But I'm just going to take it a little bit further with regards to the letter from the external auditors. And the reason I ask this is because I think it has an impact for everyone of us in this room, because we all work with groups to try and ascertain funding for many good projects.

But at the external- Audit and Governance meeting, I asked the writer, a Mr Mark Hodgson (who wrote the letter to the Combined Authority) asked, in terms of severity, where did he see our Combined Authority sitting in his professional career? He said it was quite damning, that it was up there. And I think his words were 'this is probably the worst I've dealt with'. I think it is a great shame for us to hear this but, I think, on the back of that, could you give us an update on any measures or actions that the Board are taking and the Mayor potentially himself as well? Just to see where we're going with this because, as I say, I think it's very important for all of us here, and for our residents, that some actions are taken we make progress.

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you, very much. I'm very happy to answer that and I am aware that the situation at the Combined Authority is a reasonable cause for concern for all Members here and I wouldn't want to underplay the severity of that situation.

So, there has been significant progress since, I believe, since that meeting in that a new Interim Chief Executive has been appointed. He has started work, and I think has made what I see as a good start. He's certainly been more noticeably available and engaged with members of the Board and chief executives across the area than has ever been the case in the past. And I think that's a really good step forward.

But there's no question that the Combined Authority continues to be in quite a difficult situation, largely because of the serious lack of senior staff that they have in order to be able to deliver their programmes. And that's something that I am expecting more work to come to the Board on and at our next meeting, which is next week.

Supplementary question from Councillor Corney:

Mark Hodgson actually asked me questions and I furthered my questions and asked, you know, the reaction that we've got so far, do we consider it enough, at this present time? And he came back with, there are green shoots but, he said, whether there are enough green shoots at the moment is, you know, very debatable.

You know, how do you feel? I mean, do you feel that we're doing enough? Thank you.

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you. I think I would share his perspective, actually, that there are green shoots. I hope that they will be watered and continue to grow and that actually we can make some good progress at the next Board meeting. That will depend on leaders from across the whole Combined Authority area being determined to make sure that that happens. I can give my commitment to this Council that I will do everything I can to make sure that work is done to try and get the Combined Authority into a respectable and good place.

I think that the issues that are being dealt with are of- some of them are of quite long standing. Some of the governance issues at the Combined Authority have been going on for many years, so there is quite a lot of work to be done and it will need the support of all of the various members of the Combined Authority - all the districts, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - to make sure that the progress that needs to happen, does happen.

Question from Councillor Sharp:

This is a question in respect of Appendix 4, 1.9 and it touches on the letter from EY in terms of difficult relationships with Government. And the question is:

The Mayor of the CPCA has taken it upon himself to be responsible for the Transport Portfolio and chairs the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. The CPCA earlier in the year, well I think it was last year, agreed to submit the Mayor's Bus Service Improvement Plans with Department of Transport. When bus funding was announced by Government in April this year, the Combined Authority was the only mayoral Combined Authority to receive nothing. We were told that the Mayor's Plan lacked ambition.

And the question is: Why does the CPCA not recommend that the CPCA portfolio for Transport be given to someone other than the Mayor? What will the effect of the CPCA's failure to get any funding be on our local bus network?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

There are two parts to that question. The first is around the Mayor's responsibility for the Transport Portfolio and his chairing of that committee, which is following on exactly from the previous mayor, who also chaired that committee and held the Transport Portfolio. If there are doubts about it now, there might have been doubts about it then. And I'm not going to answer - I mean as far as I'm concerned, I don't think that the chairing of that committee is the major issue or the holding of that portfolio.

On the Bus Service Improvement Plan, I think there has been considerable frustration within the Combined Authority, and to my certain knowledge within many other authorities across the whole of the Country, about the way in which decision making about that programme was done in Whitehall and the lack of feedback on what it is that meant that some areas received funding and others didn't. But, it is certainly something that we are working very hard at to try and understand what we could have done within the Combined Authority to get a better outcome for our Bus Improvement Plan. I think buses are an absolutely crucial part of trying to make sure that there is access to public transport across the whole of our area, and it's something I'm extremely focused on making sure that we improve very significantly. I hope very much the Government will

reconsider their decision not to give any funding to this area - we certainly need that funding - and I will be doing all I can, as a Member of the Board, to make sure that that funding comes in future.

Supplementary question from Councillor Sharp:

I think we're feeling the effect in a small scale – and I hate to be parochial – but again in East Cambs, the District Council have stepped in to keep the zipper going. But following- coming back to Councillor Nethsingha's answer, I certainly would be interested at some stage, when it goes to- when it goes through the Board, to see the reasons why using, what I said earlier, the Mayor's Plan lacked ambition, if what Councillor Nethsingha is saying that's partly government officials or whatever... I'd be interested to see that debate at some stage. Thank you.

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you, so I would also be interested to see what the Government's reason for that is. I think, I think about two thirds of authorities who put in bids for that did not receive money, and I think many, many of those are very interested to know why they didn't and other authorities did. On the Ely Zipper, there are a huge number of bus services across the County at the moment which are struggling with rising costs, particularly rising fuel costs, and rising costs for drivers. And I know that this is a massive problem for many bus services. I am working quite closely with people in the Greater Cambridge Partnership and in the Combined Authority to try and see what we can do this autumn to try and support our bus services, but we need to do that in a thoughtful way, looking at what the right structure for bus services across the whole County is and not just one service at a time. Thank you.

Question from Councillor Count:

From the minutes of the Combined Authority Board Meeting, 8th June 2022, Agenda Item 1.9. The external auditor Ernst Young, has written to the Authority expressing concern. I'm now going to quote: 'That the nature of the whistleblower allegations, and initial findings of the independent investigation reports raises serious questions on the culture behaviour and integrity of key individuals in the Mayor's Office.' I follow on. The top action identified by the external auditor for the Combined Authority to take was, I quote again, 'ensuring the safeguarding of the Authority's staff was of paramount importance.'

The question is: What have you- what actions have you taken as a Board Member to ensure that this the safety which is of paramount importance is pursued? Thank you.

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you. I'm not going to comment in detail on this because this is the subject of a code of conduct complaint and I think it's very important that that complaint takes its course, as it should do. The contents of the whistleblower report and the nature of those allegations are currently under- kind of already being examined under that code of conduct process, and I don't think it would be right for them to be discussed in this open forum.

Supplementary question from Councillor Count:

Chair, I don't think Councillor Nethsingha listened to or addressed the question.

So, there are these issues going on and what was described as 'paramount of importance' was the safeguarding of the employees. My question wasn't about what's in the complaint, my question was what have you done as a Board Member to ensure the safety and the safeguarding of the employees from that point forward? You cannot leave the safeguarding of them until the results of this investigation. So, I'm asking you what you've done?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

So, one of the things that has been done by the Board recently is to introduce a Member Code of Conduct, which was not something that was present at the Combined Authority before, and it was quite shocking to discover that they haven't had that for the previous five years.

Question from Councillor Hay:

My question is about staffing. It is my understanding that at the moment there are 38 vacancies out of a total a staff of 77, that currently there are eight claims for constructive dismissal in, with possible further two. In view of the fact that an Interim CEO, which I believe is on about £1,200 per day, when do they expect to get a full time CEO and thus reduce the cost? And, what are the Board doing to address the fact that they seem to be haemorrhaging staff?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

So, on the 38 out of 77, I believe that some of those are appointments which are being made because the Combined Authority has been successful in getting new funding and therefore they are recruiting new staff, rather than that those are vacancies. Some of those are vacancies because people have left. Some of those people, I have to say, I am not sorry that they have left. But a number of them are new staff coming in to do new roles at the Combined Authority, particularly in the skills and growth works area, where new staff are being appointed. I'm certainly not going to make any comments on anything to do with claims for constructive dismissal - I don't have numbers for that and I don't think it's appropriate to comment on those.

The CEO was only appointed last week. I think it's reasonable to give him a little bit of time before we start talking publicly about his replacement. But I absolutely agree it is something that we urgently need to consider.

Supplementary question from Councillor Hay:

In view of the fact that we've already heard that in the region of £31m has had to be returned to Government, how does Councillor Nethsingha think the level of vacancies has contributed to the fact that they've not been able to spend that money?

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

So, I don't actually think that the level of vacancies within the Combined Authority is the core reason why we haven't been able to return that money. The main reason that we haven't been able to return that money is to do with a lack of capacity within the sector for retrofitting and the Combined Authority is actually making- doing some very good work on that in bringing in skills and funding in order to try and train more people to be able to do that work.

Question from Councillor Boden:

I know that Councillor Nethsingha didn't want deliberately to mislead the Council and she said herself that she was not completely familiar with the numbers but, just to assist:

The problem here doesn't seem to have been a lack of capacity in the sector as far as spending is concerned, because unlike comments made by Councillor Nethsingha earlier, who was just speaking off the top of her head, I fully accept that, the actual amount which has already been spent by the 30th June by the Midlands Energy Hub, the LAB 2 for the West Midlands was £59.95m.

The amount that we hope that we will manage to spend by the 31st December, because we got an extension based on the work being coordinated by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, is only £49m. That is £10.95m less.

So, the idea that the West Midlands is significantly smaller than the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, so far as LAB 2, certainly in terms of delivery, is wrong. But what is so strange here is: How can it be that the West Midlands managed to find the capacity to be able to deliver their whole £59.95m and then start spending money on the Sustainable Warmth Projects, whereas for the Combined Authority only managed- only hopes to manage to spend £49m by the 31st December, or allocate that money elsewhere, and a lot of the £118m that we had been promised for Sustainable Warmth Projects will fall off the end of the table because there won't be time to deliver them.

Response from Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you. I'm grateful to Councillor Boden for his accuracy on numbers, and I don't think I have any very clear answer about precisely why West Midlands were able to deliver that faster than the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, but it's certainly something I will be looking to.

Supplementary comment from Councillor Boden

Very briefly, I'm extremely grateful that the CPCA Member with responsibility for skills is going to look into that because I don't have that answer either, but I think it's really important that we, in the Combined Authority, find out how they did it and we didn't.