

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 26 February 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs B E Boddington – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, P L E Bucknell, G J Bull, E R Butler, S Cawley, B S Chapman, K J Churchill, S J Criswell, I J Curtis, J W Davies, D B Dew, R S Farrer, R Fuller, D A Giles, J A Gray, S Greenall, N J Guyatt, A Hansard, G J Harlock, R Harrison, D Harty, R B Howe, C R Hyams, Ms L Kadic, S M Van De Kerkhove, Mrs P J Longford, A J Mackender-Lawrence, J P Morris, M C Oliver, J W G Pethard, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, P K Ursell, R J West and A H Williams.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R C Carter, W T Clough, Mrs L A Duffy, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere and P G Mitchell.

63. PRAYER

The Bishop of Ely, the Right Reverend S. Conway opened the meeting with prayer.

64. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Events

The Chairman described the principal events that she had attended on behalf of the Council since the last meeting mentioning, in particular, the Holocaust Memorial Service, the official opening of an extension to Huntingdon Gym and the footbridge and lift at St Neots Railway Station.

The Council also was encouraged to join the Chairman, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and Jonathan Djanogly MP in raising the flag in Samian Court in support of the 'Flying the Flag for the Commonwealth' initiative.

(b) Mr S Couper, Assistant Director (Finance & Resources)

The Chairman advised Members that Mr S Couper would be leaving the Council's employment at the end of March after twenty four years' exemplary service as both Head of Financial Services and, more recently, as Assistant Director (Finance & Resources) with Huntingdonshire and forty years

overall service in local government.

The Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite paid tribute to Mr Couper referring, in particular, to his sense of humour and the help and support he had given to Members and the Council on financial issues over the years and in more difficult times recently. Although he would be missed by all who worked with him, Councillor Ablewhite added that Mr Couper's retirement was well deserved and he extended his best wishes to him for a healthy and rewarding future. As Leaders of the Opposition Groups, Councillors M G Baker and K J Churchill concurred with these sentiments. Following a round of applause, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council's appreciation for the services of Mr S Couper be formally placed on record.

65. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18th December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared by the Members present.

67. MEDIUM TERM PLAN, BUDGET AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

Further to Minute No. 57 of the meeting of the Council held on 18th December 2013 and in conjunction with a report by the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and Item Nos. 36 and 37 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Resources presented to Members the Medium Term Plan for the period 2014/15, the 2014/15 Budget, the Treasury Management Strategy and other associated matters for the Council's consideration and approval.

In accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, the Council also considered proposals for levels of Council Tax in 2014/15 for various parts of the Huntingdonshire district.

Before proceeding, Councillor K J Churchill moved, and it was duly seconded that, when appropriate, the recommendations contained in the report of the Assistant Director should be voted upon separately rather than taken together en bloc. The Executive Leader contended that the Medium Term Plan and Budget should be supported in their entirety and not in a piecemeal way. Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be LOST.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and advice received from the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Chairman moved and it was duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that a recorded vote be taken on the conclusion of the debate on this item.

The Executive Councillor opened his remarks by suggesting that the proposed Budget/Medium Term Plan demonstrated the significant progress made by the authority in a difficult year. Councillor Gray expressed his appreciation to Messrs S Couper and C Mason for their assistance over this period. Councillor Gray also took the opportunity to thank Mr Couper for all his hard work for the District Council and for helping to make a difficult subject easier to understand. He concluded by wishing Mr Couper a long and happy retirement.

Referring to the key elements of the proposed budget, Councillor Gray reminded Members of the position in which the Council had found itself in February 2013 and the significant changes that had taken place since then to vary the Council's position.

Having taken into account the advice of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet had concurred with the recommendations not to raise Council Tax in the financial year 2014/15, to review capital spending by 2015/16 and to earn a margin on the interest on loans to other bodies referred to in the Treasury Management Strategy. The Executive Councillor also was pleased to report that the Business Community had been consulted on the Council's financial strategy and had been impressed that the Council had made savings without any significant impact on service levels.

Members' attention was drawn to the anticipated improvement in the Council's financial position at the end of 2018/19 as illustrated in Appendix B of the report which reflected –

- ◆ an increase of £1.5m in reserves;
- ◆ savings of £2.1m;
- ◆ 0% or 2% increases in Council Tax over three years; and
- ◆ savings of £1.6 m in the current year and more to emerge from the 'Facing the Future' exercise.

Importantly the Council still was on course to achieve a balanced budget by 2017/18.

The Executive Councillor thanked the Liberal Democrat Group for the submission of additional budget proposals and advised the Council that although some required detailed investigation, they would be added to the 'Facing the Future' lists. Of the proposals submitted, the District Council could not grant aid the Cromwell Museum nor was it appropriate to pursue an 'invest to save fund' arrangement.

Having regard to the Treasury Management Strategy, the Executive Councillor reported that it continued to provide an appropriate balance between caution and interest costs. The Council noted that the Treasury Management Advisory Group would continue to be consulted if there appeared to be any changes in economic circumstances and before using a new form of investment in Pooled Property Funds. The Cabinet also would be requested to approve any loan to another public body.

With these assurances, Councillor Gray moved the recommendations of the Cabinet which were seconded by the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite.

In response and on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor S Greenall thanked the Executive Councillor for his excellent presentation and concurred with his sentiments in respect of Mr S Couper. He added that whilst there was support for the proposed budget from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) both he and Councillor M F

Shellens had abstained from the vote at the meeting. Irrespective of their views, however, the Panel had been afforded a greater insight of the budget which was welcomed. Referring to the 'Budget Process' submissions from his Group, Councillor Greenall suggested that these had been prepared in response to criticism in previous years and he was pleased at the indication from the Executive Councillor that they would be taken into account going forward in the spirit of a 'living budget'. He commended the items which included – advertising, training, equipment and hired staff to the Cabinet to consider.

Similarly, Councillor K J Churchill as Leader of the UKIP Group congratulated both the Executive Councillor and Finance Officers for the presentation which had helped to make a difficult subject easier to understand. He welcomed the recommendations in respect of the Council Tax Freeze Grant and whilst generally supportive of the proposed budget and MTP, there were elements of it that his Group found difficult to accept. Councillor Churchill was of the view that elements of the pay review and 'Facing the Future' exercise should already be reflected in the MTP.

In response to this assertion, Councillor T V Rogers reminded the Council that 'Facing the Future' was also an ongoing process and that items could be added and changed over time.

In further explanation, Councillor P D Reeve suggested that the UKIP Group did not feel able to support the MTP as it proposed an increase in Council Tax in 2016/17.

In discussion, Councillor P L E Bucknell drew the Council's attention to Bid No 1085 regarding grants to town and parishes and alerted Members to the suggestion that it was the expectation of Government Ministers that these should be passed on to local Councils.

In indicating his support for the proposed budget and MTP, Councillor R Harrison expressed his disappointment at the level of engagement by the UKIP Group in the 'Facing the Future' and budget processes. Councillor S M Van De Kerkhove expressed his concern at the Council's over reliance, in his view, on the New Homes Bonus and was hopeful that those areas taking the largest share of development would be considered more favourably in terms of the allocation of community provision. Councillor R J West underlined the ethos of conservatism - to create wealth before spending it and whilst desirable it would be negligent on the part of the Council to promise what it might not be able to deliver in the future.

As former Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Deputy Executive Leader, Councillor N J Guyatt thanked Mr S Couper for his advice to him over the years. He considered it vital to establish a long term plan for the Council that was able to evolve and be flexible enough to change if necessary. He reminded Members that the Council's decisions were influenced by the need to address the shortage of new homes and the potential impact of capping should the Government choose to impose this. Because of its reputation as an authority with the ability to deliver, the Council remained in a good position with the Government but this could change in the future.

Councillor R B Howe paid tribute to the professionalism of Mr S Couper adding that the Council would miss the capabilities of an Officer of his calibre. Councillor Howe considered that it was inappropriate to discuss Council Tax together with the 'Facing the Future' process when it was marginal in terms of its impact on the Council's overall finances. In his view 'Facing the Future' was a comprehensive and effective review of the

delivery of Council services which could revolutionise both the cost and way the Council currently operated.

Councillor M F Shellens moved and it was duly seconded by Councillor M G Baker –

‘That the following paragraph be inserted as new recommendation (b) in the recommendations set out in the report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) –

- (b) that a review be undertaken of the additional risk of successful equal pay claims were the protection period for employees increased for those employees losing income as a result of the salary review, and in the event that this is not found to be significant, additional provision be made in the budget to increase the protection period for those staff affected up to a maximum extra cost of £720,000, the cost of which should be met from reserves or the special reserve.

with the substantive recommendations (b) to (e) to be reordered accordingly.’

After discussion and upon being put to the vote the Motion was declared to be LOST.

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader thanked the Liberal Democrat Group for their ‘Budget Process’ suggestions but expressed disappointment that the UKIP Group had not contributed any budget proposals themselves or participated fully in the ‘Facing the Future’ exercise. Having reminded Members what the Council had achieved over the past year, Councillor Ablewhite suggested that there was still much to do to ensure a balance between the protection of services for the most vulnerable and support for growth and innovation.

It having previously been moved and seconded, upon being put to the vote it was further

RESOLVED

- (a) that the position on the 15% limit on Net Interest and Borrowing Costs be noted and the actions outlined in paragraph 8.6c of Appendix A to the report now submitted to mitigate the impact, be endorsed;
- (b) that there be no increase in Council Tax for 2014/15, i.e. the Band D charge will remain at £133.18;
- (c) that, subject to appropriate adjustments to Appendix A to reflect the Council Tax Freeze Grant being added to the Grant base (as outlined in Appendix B), the proposed budget and Medium Term Plan be approved;
- (d) that the 2014/15 Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (Appendix C) be approved;
- (e) that the Council note the Council Tax Base for the whole Council area and individual Towns and Parishes (Annex A) as

approved by the Section 151 Officer on the 2nd December 2013 after consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Governance Panel (and publication as a key decision).

The tax base (T) which is the amount anticipated from a District Council Tax of £1 is 57,357

(f) that the following amounts calculated by the Council for 2014/15 be approved in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and associated regulations:-

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| (i) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act
Gross revenue expenditure including benefits, Town/Parish Precepts | £83,001,772 |
| (ii) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act
Revenue income including reimbursement of benefits, specific and general grants, use of reserves and any transfers from the collection fund. | £70,543,195 |
| (iii) the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act
This is the "Council Tax Requirement" including Parish/Town Precepts (item i minus item ii). It is the cash sum to be funded from District, Town and Parish Council Taxes. | £12,458,577 |
| (iv) the Council Tax requirement for 2014/15 divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act
District plus average Town/Parish Council Tax (item iii divided by District taxbase) | £217.21 |
| (v) the aggregate of all "Special Items" referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. | £4,819,772 |

The total value of Parish/Town precepts included in i and iii above.

- (vi) the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15 being item iv less item v divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act. **£133.18**
The District Council's Band D Tax for 2014/15

(vii) the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2014/15 for those parts of the District to which one or more special items (Parish/Town precepts) relate in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount in column "band D" set out in Table 1 attached to the Agenda of the meeting of the Council held on 26th February 2014.

(viii) the amounts to be taken into account for 2014/15 in respect of categories of dwellings listed in particular valuation bands in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount for each of the valuation bands in the columns "bands A to H" set out in Table 1 attached to the Agenda of the meeting of the Council held on 26th February 2014.

- (g) that the amounts of precept issued to the Council by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority for each of the categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands in accordance with Section 40 of the Act shown in Table 1 attached to the Agenda of the meeting of the Council held on 26th February 2014 be noted.
- (h) that, having regard to the calculations above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act, sets the figures shown in Table 2 attached to the Agenda of the meeting of the Council held on 26th February 2014 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2014/15 for each of the categories of dwelling shown. ***This is the total Council Tax to be collected, incorporating the requirements of all of the relevant bodies, for each town or parish area.***
- (i) that the Council notes that, in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the basic amount of its Council Tax for 2014/15 is not excessive.
The basic amount at b(vi) above is not excessive as defined by the Government.

ANNEX A**TAXBASE 2014/15**

	£
Abbotsley	245
Abbots Ripton	128
Alconbury	530
Alconbury Weston	274
Alwalton	114
Barham & Woolley	28
Bluntisham	720
Brampton	1,730
Brington & Molesworth	126
Broughton	88
Buckden	1,130
Buckworth	50
Bury	600
Bythorn & Keyston	135
Catworth	145
Chesterton	57
Colne	350
Conington	66
Covington	43
Denton & Caldecote	25
Diddington	25
Earith	561
Easton	75
Ellington	230
Elton	282
Farcet	515
Fenstanton	1,120
Folksworth & Washingley	344
Glatton	130
Godmanchester	2,315
Grafham	235
Great & Little Gidding	110
Great Gransden	445
Great Paxton	360
Great Staughton	318
Haddon	25
Hail Weston	240
Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	50
Hemingford Abbots	334
Hemingford Grey	1,255
Hilton	448
Holme	227
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	965
Houghton & Wyton	783
Huntingdon	6,875
Kimbolton & Stonely	580
Kings Ripton	82
Leighton Bromswold	78
Little Paxton	1,390
Morborne	10
Offord Cluny & Offord D'Arcy	490

Old Hurst	90
Old Weston	84
Perry	254
Pidley-cum-Fenton	145
Ramsey	2,655
St Ives	5,640
St Neots	10,295
Sawtry	1,655
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	210
Somersham	1,330
Southoe & Midloe	148
Spaldwick	234
Stilton	755
Stow Longa	63
The Stukeleys	390
Tilbrook	116
Toseland	38
Upton & Coppingford	83
Upwood & The Raveleys	405
Warboys	1,300
Waresley-cum-Tetworth	145
Water Newton	40
Winwick	40
Wistow	214
Woodhurst	149
Woodwalton	78
Wyton-on-the-Hill	390
Yaxley	2,785
Yelling	145
	<u>57,357</u>

(In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Order) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the following Members voted for, against or abstained from the Motion –

For the Motion – Ablewhite, K M Baker, Banerjee, Bates, Boddington, Bucknell, Bull, Butler, Cawley, Chapman, Criswell, Davies, Dew, Fuller, Gray, Guyatt, Hansard, Harlock, Harrison, Harty, Howe, Kadic, Longford, Mackender-Lawrence, Oliver, Pethard, Reynolds, Rogers, Sanderson, Tuplin, Tysoe, Ursell, West and Williams;

Against the Motion – None

Abstentions – M G Baker, Churchill, Curtis, Farrer, Giles, Greenall, Hyams, Morris, Reeve, Shellens and Van De Kerkhove.)

68. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

In compliance with the requirements of Sections 38 and 39 of the Localism Act 2011, the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite presented a report by the LGSS HR Business Partner (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in connection with the District Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015.

Although a statutory requirement for the Council to approve a pay policy statement by 31st March, the Executive Leader explained that the new pay model and allowances and the impact of any appeals from staff could have significant implications for the Statement up to the date of publication. In these circumstances and to ensure the

information published contained the final pay model and reward strategy for 2014, the Executive Leader suggested that the Managing Director be authorised to publish the Statement on the Council's behalf once these matters had been resolved.

Accordingly and having noted that a copy of the finalised statement would be issued to all Members via email prior to 1st April, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Managing Director and Head of Paid Service be authorised to communicate and publish the Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 by 1st April 2014.

69. PARISH REVIEW - BUCKDEN AND DIDDINGTON

The Executive Councillor for Economic Development & Legal, Councillor T D Sanderson presented a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in response to a formal request from the former Chairman and Clerk of Diddington Parish Meeting to make an Order grouping the parish with the neighbouring parish of Buckden under a common parish council.

Members noted that despite attempts to maintain the parish meeting, the former Chairman and Clerk had eventually concluded, in the absence of any local interest, that the parish meeting should be dissolved with effect from 31st December. In these circumstances, the Council

RESOLVED

that an Order be made under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1972 to group the parishes of Buckden and Diddington under the common parish council of Buckden Parish Council comprising 15 Councillors with effect from 22nd May 2014.

70. GREEN PAPER ITEM - LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Councillor N J Guyatt, Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy reported, with regret, that the process towards adoption of a new Local Plan to 2036 would be subject to delay. Although it was essential that the District planned for housing and employment land development over the next twenty years, there was an expectation from the Planning Inspectorate that the District Council, in doing so, should co-operate with neighbouring authorities on issues of common interest.

Therefore, for the District Council's plan to proceed, the authority would need to demonstrate that it had taken advice from Cambridgeshire County Council on transport matters. Accordingly, the County Council had been requested to undertake an appraisal of transport options, using traffic modelling to develop transport links which would include public transport and cycle ways, for instance, as well as the car. Councillor Guyatt acknowledged that, in a rural District, there was often no alternative to use of a car and therefore discussions also were progressing with the Highways Agency on

improvements to the A14 and A428. He also indicated that he had met the Minister for Planning and discussed the A428, A141 and potential road links north of St Ives, via Somersham and Earith.

The Council was advised that, in conjunction with South Cambridgeshire District and Bedford Borough Councils the District Council intended to submit a bid for funding towards some of these major schemes. Given that these options will have transport implications for the market towns and impact on the Local Plan as a consequence, there was no alternative but to delay the Local Plan until such time as a County wide transport strategy could be submitted as evidence in its support.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Guyatt confirmed that all options would be considered during discussions on the County Transport Strategy and that these would include the A1198 at Godmanchester, RAF Wyton and Harrison Way, St Ives.

Referring to the delay to the Local Plan, Councillor D Harty asked what impact this might have for any Neighbourhood Plans currently being prepared by town and parish councils. Having reminded the Council that Neighbourhood Plans were required to conform to the Local Plan of the principal authority, Councillor Guyatt suggested that he was unaware of the impact this might have for town and parish councils but would make enquiries and respond to the questioner, in writing, after the meeting and send a copy of his reply to all Members.

Councillor R B Howe advised the Council that there was no reason to hold up the preparation of parish plans as these could help to inform the Neighbourhood Plan process once they were able to be progressed by communities.

In answer to a question from Councillor P D Reeve, Councillor Guyatt remarked that the delay to the Local Plan should not impact on the level of CIL monies which ultimately might become payable to town and parish councils.

In terms of a new timescale for the District Local Plan, Councillor Guyatt anticipated that it might be available to consider in July/August 2014. He reported that the draft SPD 'Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire' (which would act as background document to the Local Plan) was scheduled to be considered by the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well Being) in June.

As Chairman of the Development Management Panel, Councillor D B Dew thanked the Executive Councillor for the update on progress and underlined how vital it was for infrastructure to be planned properly in the future. He confirmed the understanding of the Executive Councillor that Neighbourhood Plans had to accord with the Core Strategy and Local Plan of the principal authority and that there was no reason why local councils should not continue to work on their plans, in the meantime, in readiness for publication of the new Local Plan.

71. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader and Chairman of

the Cabinet presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd January and 13th February 2014.

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In connection with Item No. 36, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 67.

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In connection with Item No. 37, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 67.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 23rd January and 13th February 2014 be received and adopted.

(b) Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Councillor T V Rogers presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 9th January and 6th February 2014.

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Further to Minute No 64, Councillor Rogers expressed his own appreciation to Mr S Couper for the assistance and support he had given him during his time as Executive Councillor for Resources.

.....

In connection with Item No 28 and in response to a question from Councillor K J Churchill, Councillor Rogers indicated that it would be the intention to notify the Panel, in the first instance, of the ways in which savings had been achieved in the Revenues & Benefits Service at Norwich City Council before passing on any useful information to other Members.

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In connection with Item No 29, and on behalf of his colleagues, the Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels, Councillor Rogers thanked all Members who had participated in the meetings held to consider the 'Facing the Future' process.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 9th January and 6th February 2014 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Councillor G Bull presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 14th January and 11th February 2014.

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In connection with Item No 24 and in response to a question from Councillor I J Curtis, Councillor Bull understood that Town and Parish Councils had already been invited to nominate a representative to the Growth & Infrastructure Thematic Group but he would verify his information and advise the questioner accordingly after the meeting.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 14th January and 11th February 2014 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 7th January and 4th February 2014.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 7th January and 4th February 2014 be received and adopted.

(e) Development Management Panel

Councillor D B Dew presented the Report of the meeting of the Development Management Panel held on 20th January 2014.

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Councillor Dew drew attention to the workload of the Panel

which was not, perhaps, reflected in the length of the Report to the Council. As the most recent meeting had lasted beyond midnight, he commended Members, Officers and the public for their resilience and concentration over so many hours.

On the same subject, Councillor R J West paid tribute to Councillor Dew, as Chairman of the Panel for the manner in which he chaired meetings and the advice he continued to give to Members and speakers despite the lateness of the hour.

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In connection with Item No 13 and in response to questions from Councillor P D Reeve regarding both the number of decisions that might be taken under temporary delegation arrangements and whether local Ward Members would be advised when decisions had been taken in this way, Councillor Dew assured the questioner that the temporary arrangements in the Development Management Division would operate no longer than necessary, that advertisements have been placed to recruit to the posts of Team Managers and that he together with the Executive Councillor and Senior Managers would continue to keep the situation under review.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Development Management Panel held on 20th January 2014 be received and adopted.

(f) Employment Panel

Councillor S Cawley presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 12th February 2014.

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In connection with Item No. 21, Councillor Cawley invited the Council to endorse the sentiments of the Panel with regard to Mr B Louth, Transport Management Officer in the Planning Division who had recently retired from the local government service.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 12th February 2014 be received and

adopted.

(g) Licensing and Protection Panel

Councillor J W Davies presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 28th January 2014.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 28th January 2014 be received and adopted.

(h) Corporate Governance Panel

Councillor E R Butler presented the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 29th March 2014.

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In connection with Item No 29, Councillors K J Churchill and the Executive Councillor for Resources, Councillor J A Gray took the opportunity to congratulate the Corporate Fraud Team for their efforts in uncovering fraudulent activity and generating income. Councillor Butler undertook to convey these sentiments to the Corporate Fraud Manager.

.....
In connection with Item No 34 and in response to a question from Councillor M F Shellens, Councillor Butler assured the questioner that the Panel had taken very seriously the issue of a poor response by managers to audit actions and had instructed the Audit Manager to find ways to improve the response in the future.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 29th March 2014 be received and adopted.

72. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Paragraph 8.3 of the Rules), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral

questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor P D Reeves to the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite

Having regard to the distribution of tickets for a Royal Garden Party, the Executive Leader assured the questioner that, following discussion with the Managing Director, the tickets had been allocated equitably between Councillors and Officers in accordance with instructions issued by Buckingham Palace.

Question from Councillor S M Van De Kerkhove to the Executive Councillor for Resources, Councillor J A Gray

The questioner drew attention to the dilapidated condition of a property known as Elm Lodge in Eynesbury which had been abandoned for many years. He asked whether it would be viable for the Council to bring the property back into use as bed and breakfast accommodation or as a hostel for young people. The Executive Councillor confirmed that the property was not in the ownership of the District Council but that the suggestion was laudable however and he would refer the question to the Assistant Director to consider

Question from Councillor R J West to the Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy, Councillor N J Guyatt

In terms of the potential for flood risk associated with future housing development, Councillor Guyatt reminded Members that the Council had made a significant contribution to the Flood Alleviation Scheme for Godmanchester and whilst guided by the Environment Agency on future development would consider taking similar action if it was considered necessary to do so in the future.

Question from Councillor D A Giles to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Councillor D M Tysoe

In response to a question regarding the provision of recycling facilities for those residents living in flats particularly those owned by Luminus in Eaton Socon, Councillor Tysoe explained that he had prepared a written response for the Councillor which he would send to him after the meeting.

Question from Councillor D Harty to the Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy, Councillor N J Guyatt

Further to Minute No 70, Councillor Guyatt reaffirmed his intention to establish what impact the delay to the District Council's Local Plan would have on any Neighbourhood Plan submitted by Town and Parish Councils in April.

Question from Councillor R J West to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Councillor D M Tysoe

Attention was drawn by the questioner to the award presented to Mr P Lummis, Project Engineer in the Environment Management Division under the British Astronomical Association's 'Campaign For Dark

Skies' which targets a reduction in inefficient lighting. Councillor Tysoe agreed that the award was a great credit to Mr Lummis in an area of work in which Huntingdonshire has led the way.

73. VARIATION TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS, ETC

In view of the inability of Councillor M G Baker to participate in forthcoming meetings of the Senior Officers' Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that Councillor W T Clough be appointed to the membership of the Senior Officers' Panel in the place of Councillor M G Baker.

The meeting ended at 9.57pm.

Chairman