

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, 25 February 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor A J Mackender-Lawrence – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, G J Bull, E R Butler, R C Carter, S Cawley, K J Churchill, Mrs S Conboy, I J Curtis, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs L A Duffy, R S Farrer, M Francis, R Fuller, I D Gardener, D A Giles, J A Gray, A J Hardy, G J Harlock, R Harrison, D Harty, T Hayward, R B Howe, B Hyland, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, Ms L Kadic, S M Van De Kerkhove, Mrs R E Mathews, P G Mitchell, J P Morris, M C Oliver, P D Reeve, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, D M Tysoe and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, I C Bates, B S Chapman, S J Criswell, Mrs A D Curtis, A Hansard, Mrs D C Reynolds, R G Tuplin and P K Ursell.

58. PRAYER

The Venerable Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, opened the meeting with a prayer.

59. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman opened the meeting by sending his best wishes to Councillor S J Criswell and his family on their recent bereavement who had been unable to attend the meeting.

The Chairman announced that he had been advised that Luminus Housing Group had indicated an intention to film the meeting. Luminus had been made aware of the guidelines with which they had to comply and understood that no member of the public should be filmed without their consent.

The Chairman described the principal events that he had attended on behalf of the Council since the last meeting mentioning in particular, the United States Air Force concert, the opening of the food bank in Huntingdon, Holocaust Memorial Day, charity dinners with the Mayor of Peterborough and the Mayor of March, the Salvation Army hostel in Kings Ripton Court, Huntingdon, the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire Awards Ceremony and the Annual Pancake Race in Huntingdon.

The Council was also encouraged to join the Chairman in raising the flag outside of the Council offices in support of the 'Flying the Flag for the Commonwealth' initiative.

The Chairman concluded his announcements by reminding Members of the Rules of Debate that had been circulated previously.

60. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th December 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors R Fuller, D Harty and M F Shellens disclosed a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute No. 66 by virtue of their appointment to the Board of Luminus Housing Group.

Councillor R Harrison declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute No. 68 by virtue of his employment with the Highways Agency.

62. 2015/16 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2019/20

In conjunction with a report by the Head of 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 2015/16 Revenue Budget, the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Treasury Management Strategy (MTFS) 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.

The Executive Councillor opened his remarks by suggesting the significance of this proposed budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy which had resulted in a revenue surplus for the first time since 2003. Members were reminded that the principal aim was to focus on the interests of the residents of Huntingdonshire with any changes made not affecting frontline delivery of services and providing better value for money.

Referring to the key elements of the proposed budget, Councillor Gray expressed his appreciation to Mrs J Slatter, Mr C Mason and Ms R Maxwell for their assistance over this period and for producing a clearer presentational format of the budget. He also thanks Officers and Members for their assistance in identifying further savings to the budget.

Councillor Gray acquainted Members with the programme of review of the budget and further detail of the proposed budget, including the proposed Council Tax freeze and robust programme of Zero Based Budgeting.

Having taken account of comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), the Cabinet endorsed the savings that had been achieved through the Facing the Future and Zero Based Budgeting programmes and the further savings initiative that the Cabinet Members had been tasked to achieve. Councillor Gray also was pleased to report that the business community had been consulted and all those that had responded fully supported the proposed freeze of Council Tax.

The Executive Councillor in referring to the Treasury Management Strategy, reported that although the economy was showing signs of growth, interest rates remained low and outlined the Council's proposed policy to continue to use short term investments with a lower risk.

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

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), Councillor Harrison, indicated his support for the proposed budget and MTFs and informed Members that there had been a positive contribution from the Panel and fully endorsed the proposals on behalf of the Panel.

In response and on behalf of the UKIP Group, Councillor K J Churchill expressed his gratitude to the Executive Councillor and Officers for the presentation which had resulted in a clearer report and clarification of information when requested. He thanked his fellow UKIP Councillors for looking into the budget and in response to the criticism surrounding an alternative budget, Councillor Churchill explained that it was important to work with the other political groups of the Council to ensure that Members are delivering the best service and value for money for the Council Tax payers. He welcomed the recommendations in respect of the Council Tax freeze and whilst generally supportive of the proposed budget and MTFs, Councillor Churchill outlined elements that the Group found difficult to accept and informed Members that the Fees and Charges schedule was incomplete and as such could not support the recommendation.

Similarly, Councillor M F Shellens on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, thanked the Members and Officers for the excellent presentation and clarity of approach. He added his concerns that the proposed budget made no reference to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which would provide additional income, the impact of the removal of the New Homes Bonus allocation funding and proposals regarding the feasibility for the utilisation of funding earned from other investments.

In response, Councillor Gray welcomed the support for the proposed budget and although it had been the first time the Council had been asked to levy the fees and charges for the Council he was unclear as to the suggested incompleteness of the proposals. In referring to the CIL, it was felt that this element was not a feature that would impact and the New Homes Bonus allocation funding was dependent upon the results of the forthcoming election in May. Councillor Gray

assured Members that although the Council would not be reckless in their investments there was still a requirement for the provision of housing to accommodate future growth.

Councillor S Van De Kerkhove outlined his support for the proposed budget but expressed concern in the utilisation of reserves to subsidise Council Tax and felt that there should be further investment in the provision of housing, with the focus on affordable housing for young people.

In further explanation, Councillor P D Reeve concurred with the sentiments expressed to fellow Members and Officers in the compilation of the proposed budget and indicated his support.

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

That the following paragraph be inserted as an additional recommendation 6 in the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Resources –

6. That in the interests of transparency and openness, full disclosure of movements in the Strategic Reserve, the make-up of those movements and the resulting balances shall be presented to the Council in the same meetings as the six monthly Treasury Management reports.

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

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader commended Officers and Members on their hard work in the production of a budget that had gone a substantial way to bridging the gap on the use of reserves. He expressed his disappointment that an alternative budget and response to the Facing the Future exercise had not been presented by the opposition groups. In concluding, Councillor Ablewhite suggested that it had been a great achievement that the Council would not be providing fewer services than in previous years but delivering added value, whilst supporting local businesses and providing opportunities for future growth.

Before proceeding with the vote, Councillor K J Churchill suggested that the recommendations contained in the report of the Head of Resources should be voted upon separately rather than taken en bloc. The Chairman contended that the Budget and MTFS should be supported in their entirety and not in a piecemeal way.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the Chairman moved and it was duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that a recorded vote be taken on this item.

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

RESOLVED

- (a) that there be no increase in Council Tax for 2015/16, i.e. the Band D Charge will remain at £133.18;
- (b) that the proposed budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 (Appendix 1, paragraph 1.3) be approved;
- (c) that the 2015/16 Fees and Charges Schedule (Appendix 1, paragraph 7 and Annex A) be approved;
- (d) that the 2015/16 Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the Annual Minimum Reserve Policy (Appendix 2) be approved;
- (e) that the Council note the Council Tax Base for the whole Council area and individual Towns and Parishes (para 6.2) as approved by the Section 151 Officer on the 3rd December 2014 after consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Governance Panel (and subsequent publication as a key decision).

The tax base (T) which is the amount £58,329 anticipated from a District Council Tax of £1 is

- (f) that the following amounts calculated by the Council for 2015/16 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 **£78,386,683** 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.**
 - (ii) the aggregate of the amounts **£65,587,958** 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.**
 - (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 **£12,798,725**
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.

(iv) the Council Tax requirement for 2015/16 divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act **£219.42**

District plus average Town/Parish Council Tax (item iii divided by District taxbase)

(v) the aggregate of all "Special Items" referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. **£5,030,469**

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

(vi) The Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 being item iii less 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 2015/16

(vii) the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2015/16 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.

(viii) the amounts to be taken into account for 2015/16 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.

(g) that the amounts of precept issued to the Council by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police Authority, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority and for each Parish Council for each of the categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands in accordance with Section 40 of the Act shown in para 6.3 attached be noted.

(h) that, having regard to the calculations above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act, hereby sets the

figures shown in para 6.4 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2015/16 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 2015/16 is not excessive.

The basic amount at b(vi) above is not excessive as defined by the Government.

Tax Base 2015/16

Abbotsley	249
Abbots Ripton	135
Alconbury	540
Alconbury Weston	279
Alwalton	117
Barham & Woolley	28
Bluntisham	720
Brampton	1728
Brington & Molesworth	135
Broughton	90
Buckden (incorporating Diddington)	1152
Buckworth	51
Bury	603
Bythorn & Keyston	135
Catworth	147
Chesterton	57
Colne	351
Conington	65
Covington	45
Denton & Caldecote	26
Earith	567
Easton	77
Ellington	232
Elton	279
Farcet	518
Fenstanton	1125
Folksworth & Washingley	344
Glatton	131
Godmanchester	2331
Grafham	234
Great & Little Gidding	117
Great Gransden	450
Great Paxton	360
Great Staughton	324
Haddon	24
Hail Weston	243

Hamerton & &	52
Steeple Gidding	
Hemingford Abbots	333
Hemingford Grey	1269
Hilton	450
Holme	227
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	968
Houghton & Wyton	774
Huntingdon	7056
Kimbolton &	578
Stonely	
Kings Ripton	81
Leighton	81
Bromswold	
Little Paxton	1476
Morborne	10
Offird Cluny &	495
Offird D'Arcy	
Old Hurst	90
Old Weston	90
Perry	261
Pidley-cum-Fenton	149
Ramsey	2709
St Ives	5742
St Neots	10530
Sawtry	1746
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	210
Somersham	1341
Southoe & Midloe	149
Spaldwick	243
Stilton	765
Stow Longa	63
The Stukeleys	396
Tilbrook	117
Toseland	36
Upton &	84
Coppingford	
Upwood & The	414
Raveleys	
Warboys	1296
Waresley-cum-Tetworth	144
Water Newton	42
Winwick	40
Wistow	216
Woodhurst	153
Woodwalton	78
Wyton-on-the-Hill	405
Yaxley	2817
Yelling	144

58,329

- (j) that in the interests of transparency and openness, full disclosure of movements in the Strategic Reserve, the make-up of those movements and the resulting balances shall be

presented to the Council in the same meetings as the six monthly Treasury Management reports.

(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, M G Baker, Boddington, Bucknell, Bull, Butler, Carter, Cawley, Conboy, Davies, Dew, Dickinson, Francis, Fuller, Gardener, Giles, Gray, Harlock, Harrison, Harty, Hayward, Howe, Jordan, Kadic, Kadewere, Mackender-Lawrence, Mathews, Mitchell, Morris, Oliver, Sanderson, Shellens, Tysoe, Van De Kerkhove and West;

For the motion but abstention from resolution (c) above – Churchill, I J Curtis, Duffy, Farrer, Hardy, Hyland and Reeve.

Against the Motion - None

63. 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 Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in connection with the District Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16.

The Statement, which is required to be approved by the Council by 31st March 2015 was now produced annually and detailed the Council's policies relating to Officer remuneration.

Councillor M F Shellens moved and it was duly seconded by Councillor Mrs P A Jordan –

That the following paragraph be inserted into the Pay policy Statement set out in the report of the Corporate Team Manager –

'Where a member of staff is made redundant within two years of his/her salary being reduced, the Council will make up their redundancy pay to the level that they would have received had their salary not been reduced'.

After discussion on existing vacancies, staff morale and associated costings and upon being put to the vote the Motion was declared LOST.

Accordingly and having noted that a copy of the finalised statement would be issued to all Members via email prior to 1st April, it was moved by Councillor Ablewhite, duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that the Policy Statement for 2015/16 be approved

64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PRESENTATIONS

(a) Councillor R B Harrison - Chairman, Economic Well-Being Panel

Councillor R Harrison, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) began his presentation by outlining what the Panel had achieved to date in 2014/15 which had included an improved engagement with Members of the Panel and better working relationship with the Cabinet. Members attention was drawn to their recent work programme which had included the Facing the Future and Zero Based Budgeting programmes, shared services and the proposed Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In highlighting future changes to improve the effectiveness of the Panel, Councillor Harrison reported that he was working towards a longer term forward plan of work for the Panel, greater responsibility for Members of the Panel to scrutinise and more effective Joint Chairman's meetings and Scrutiny away days.

In concluding, Councillor Harrison referred to the priorities for 2015/16 through improving the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny and working more closely with the other Panels. Members were informed that the Panel would continue to challenge the Facing the Future Programme and monitor the progress of Zero Based Budgeting, as well as scrutinising shared services through working with other local authorities and address performance monitoring.

In response to a question from Councillor R S Farrer on the breakdown of costings for the multi-storey car park in Huntingdon, Councillor Harrison undertook to provide an answer in writing.

(b) Councillor S Criswell - Chairman, Social Well-Being Panel

The Chairman reported that this item had been deferred owing to the absence of Councillor S J Criswell.

(c) Questions to Other Members of the Cabinet

In response to a question from Councillor Ms L A Duffy regarding the Council's Traveller Sites Policy in the light of increases in the distribution of such communities, Councillor D B Dew explained that it would form part of the new Local Plan.

In response to questions from Councillor P Kadewere on the safety signage in Butts Grove Way, Huntingdon and the lease on Oak Tree Stores, Huntingdon, Councillor Ablewhite undertook to provide a written response.

Regarding the planning enforcement and response rates in Little Paxton and in response to a question from Councillor K

J Churchill, Councillor D B Dew explained that the Planning Team had experienced some difficulties with staff vacancies in the past year which had had an impact on the resolution of cases but was pleased to report that the situation had been resolved and the backlog of cases had been addressed. Councillor Dew invited Councillor Churchill to discuss any specific issues with him in Little Paxton outside of the meeting.

Arising from a question from Councillor R S Farrer on the background to the Community Infrastructure Levy, Councillor D B Dew alluded to the complexity of the process and how the funding was being passed into parishes. Councillor Dew agreed that in order to assist parishes with details of how the money could be utilised, it was necessary for briefing note to be prepared.

65. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Having regard to a report by the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and in noting that a decision not to apply an increase of 2.2% to Members' allowances in accordance with the automatic index mechanism provided in the approved scheme would save £8,000, the Council

RESOLVED

that there be no increase in Members' allowances in the financial year 2015/16.

66. INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST LUMINUS HOUSING GROUP

By reference to a report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on complaints against Luminus Housing Group raised by County Councillor P Bullen on behalf of some tenants, Members were acquainted with details of the investigations into the complaints which was undertaken by an independent housing expert. In noting that none of the complaints had been upheld and that matter had been concluded, Councillor D Harty moved and it was duly seconded by Councillor R Fuller –

That the following paragraph be inserted as an additional recommendation in the recommendations set out in the report of the Managing Director –

'That the proposed allegations were unfounded with a conclusion reached by the Independent expert and the matter now closed.

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

Councillor K J Churchill addressed the Council on behalf of County Councillor P Bullen and explained that the report contained some inaccuracies and he undertook to circulate to Members details of his concerns.

Councillor R Fuller expressed his anger at the way County Councillor Bullen had acted in investigating these complaints and the resultant actions and costs for the vulnerable residents.

In response to concern expressed by Councillor P D Reeve regarding the treatment of County Councillor Bullen, the Executive Leader expressed his disgust at how these vulnerable residents had been treated and the actions that had resulted as a consequence of his actions.

Whereupon, the Council

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report attached at Appendix 1 be noted and that the Council agree that there is no further issue to investigate; and
- (b) that the proposed allegations were unfounded with a conclusion reached by the Independent expert and the matter now closed.

67. 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 22nd January and 12th February 2015.

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In connection with Item No. 36, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 62.

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In connection with Item No. 37, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 62.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 22nd January and 12th February 2015 be received and adopted.

(b) Development Management Panel

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington presented the Report of the

meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 15th December 2014, 19th January and 16th February 2015.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 15th December 2014, 19th January and 16th February 2015 be received and adopted.

(c) Employment Panel

Councillor R J West presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 11th February 2015.

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In connection with Item No. 21, Councillor West invited the Council to endorse the sentiments of the Panel with regard to Messrs F Goodship, R Jeakins, M Sturgess and Ms S McNalty, who had recently retired from the local government service.

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Councillor West paid tribute to Councillor S Cawley as the retiring Chairman of the Panel and was endorsed by Councillor Ms L A Duffy.

.....

That subject to inclusion of the words “and Vice-Chairman” after Chairman in Item 16 of the Report, deletion of the words “17th December 2014” and replacement with “19th November 2014” in Item 17 and deletion of the word “spot” and replacement with “recognise” in Item 19, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 11th February 2015 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Councillor R Harrison presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 8th January and 5th February 2015.

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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 8th January and 5th February 2015 be received and adopted.

(e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Councillor G J Bull presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 4th February 2015.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 4th February 2015 be received and adopted.

(f) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Councillor R Carter presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 6th January and 3rd February 2015.

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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 6th January and 3rd February 2015 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 27th January 2015.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 27th January 2015 be received and adopted.

68. MOTION ON NOTICE

Before proceeding to the Motion on the Agenda, the Chairman announced his intention to invoke the discretion awarded to him

under paragraph 9.5 (iii) of the Council Procedure Rules and to rule that the Motion submitted by Councillor T Hayward on being moved and seconded will be dealt with at the meeting in the interests of the convenient and conducive despatch of the Council's business.

Accordingly, it was moved by Councillor T Hayward and duly seconded that –

“This Council notes:

The announcement that Government is to invest funding into a study looking into the status of the A1 between Peterborough and the M25 is very welcome.

Since the M1 to Leeds and then the A1 north of that has been seen as the strategic route to the North, the A1 through Huntingdonshire has become something of a ‘forgotten route’. The need for improvements is no more acute than at Buckden roundabout where HDC's own Infrastructure Study has shown that it is a significant constraint to growth as well as the road being a blight on the lives of the residents of Buckden, Diddington and Southoe.

The possibility of the route being upgraded to motorway standard is an important development and the fact that the previous planned improvement between Baldock, Hertfordshire to Alconbury as part of the then Government White Paper ‘Roads for Prosperity’ in 1989 is being quoted as a possibility again, is something that should be investigated.

The recent Highways Agency Route-Based Strategy investigations for the A1 is due to publish its final recommendations in March 2015. The initial report has shown that between London and Leeds, this section of the A1 represents one of the ten most least-reliable journey time locations on the route. Additionally, the report highlights poor network performance in the peak hours, safety concerns and congestion on the route through Buckden.

This Council believes:

That given we have three major trunk routes passing through the District and two of these, the A14 and A428, are subject to improvement proposals, it is vital that similar improvements to the A1 be made.

From London, this is the last roundabout between Buckden and North Berwick, a distance of some 278 miles.

The existing route lacks the capacity to accommodate current and future travel demands as well as planned growth and a comprehensive approach is needed for a wholesale upgrading of the route to motorway standard because piecemeal improvement schemes would not offer a satisfactory solution addressing both strategic and local needs.

Given the nature of the current problems Huntingdonshire's

Draft Local Plan to 2036 highlights the current capacity constraints on the A1 at Buckden. Likewise, Cambridgeshire County Council Long-Term Transport Strategy includes the need for options to be considered for this stretch of the A1 in order to provide new capacity for growth and to address existing problems on this stretch of the transport network.

Whilst there are planned improvements to the A14 and A428, it is important that similar improvements on this section of the A1 are brought forward as soon as possible so that the route does not act as a barrier to the future growth and prosperity of the area.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy to work with their fellow Members to:

- seek a firm commitment from Government and the Highways Agency that a comprehensive study of options for the A1 from the south of the District to the planned new A1/A14 junction will be developed and that a comprehensive scheme for both strategic and local traffic developed, funded and delivered at the earliest opportunity for this section of the A1 through Huntingdonshire to enable it to perform effectively as part of a strategic north/south route between London and Scotland; and
- develop an A1 alliance to work with our key partners including neighboring authorities, the Highways Agency and local Members of Parliament to lobby government for early investment and improvements on this section of the A1 thereby enabling the continued growth and prosperity of this area.”

Following debate and having been put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be CARRIED.

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

There were no changes to report.

The meeting concluded at 10.05pm.

Chairman