

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 22 February 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor P L E Bucknell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, T D Alban, K M Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, D Brown, G J Bull, E R Butler, S Cawley, B S Chapman, Mrs S Conboy, J E Corley, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs A Donaldson, Mrs L A Duffy, M Francis, R Fuller, I D Gardener, D A Giles, Mrs S A Giles, J A Gray, S Greenall, R Harrison, T Hayward, R B Howe, B Hyland, P Kadewere, Mrs R E Mathews, D J Mead, J P Morris, J M Palmer, P D Reeve, M F Shellens, L R Swain, Mrs J Tavener, Mrs S L Taylor, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, D R Underwood, K D Wainwright, R J West and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R C Carter, D Harty, Mrs P A Jordan, Mrs D C Reynolds and D Watt.

61. PRAYER

The Reverend James Barber of Huntingdon Methodist Church opened the meeting with a prayer.

62. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman presented to the Council an account of the activities both he and the Vice-Chairman Councillor R J West had attended since the last meeting. In so doing, the Chairman drew Members attention to his attendance at the Performing Arts Centre, Hinchingsbrooke School for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award Ceremony, a Civic Reception hosted at East Cambridgeshire District Council to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the Great Fen Lego event at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

In referring to his hosting of a Holocaust Memorial Service in January 2017 that was attended by students from the St Ivo School, the Chairman reported upon the moving presentation of their experiences that had be brought about by the School's annual visit to Auschwitz and expressed his gratitude to those Members who took part on the Service.

Attention was drawn to forthcoming activities, including the Charity Quiz at the Corn Exchange, St Ives, Pancake Flipathon in Market Square, Huntingdon, Last Night of the Proms from Peterborough Cathedral and hosting of the Flag Raising for Commonwealth Day. The Chairman also reported that there would be an informal presentation to former Councillor I C Bates to award him his title of Honorary Alderman prior to the next meeting on the Council in March 2017.

63. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st December 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64. MEMBERS INTERESTS'

Members of the Council who had also been elected as Town/Parish Councillors declared non-statutory disclosable interests in Item No. 71 by virtue of their membership of their respective Town/Parish Councils.

65. 2017/18 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2018/19 TO 2021/22)

The Chairman reminded Members of the decision made by the Council to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11 (Rules of Debate) to enable a full debate to be made by Members on the 2017/18 Budget and medium Term Plan Financial Strategy in an open manner. The Council therefore

RESOLVED

that Council Procedure Rule 11 (Rules of Debate) be suspended for the duration of the discussion on Minute No. 65, during which time the common law rules of debate be observed by Members and applied by the Chairman.

In conjunction with a report by the Head of Resources and PowerPoint presentation (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), the Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources presented to Members the 2017/18 Revenue Budget, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22, the Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and Prudential, Treasury Management and Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) Indicators for 2017/18 and other associated matters for the Council's consideration and approval.

In accordance with Section (30)2 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council also considered proposals for levels of Council Tax in 2017/18 for various parts of the Huntingdonshire district.

In his opening remarks, Councillor Gray informed Members that he would be presenting the report at a higher level given the fact that it had previously been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers) and the report had been made available to all Members prior to the Council meeting. Attention was drawn to Appendix 4 of the report that summarised the results of consultation with the business community that, although low, had been a higher response than the previous year.

Councillor Gray expressed his support to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers) in consideration of the draft budget and their constructive input. He gave particular thanks to the Managing Director and her Team who had engaged in the process, together with consideration of challenges and direction from fellow Members of the Cabinet and to the Head of Resources, Finance Manager and Members of the Accountancy Team.

In drawing Members' attention to the updated 'Plan on a Page' that outlined the Council's vision and strategic priorities as part of the Corporate Plan, Councillor Gray explained that the Financial Strategy had been updated to

reflect the reduction in the budget deficit that had been reported in the previous year as £3.6m in 2020/21 and had now been a predicted deficit of £1.33m in 2020/21 and £1.36m in 2021/22. In reporting upon the huge accomplishments and significant progress made in achieving a budget surplus of £3m, Councillor Gray indicated that there were further savings to be realised as there was likely to be significant reductions in government grants; Revenue Support Grant and curtailment of the New Homes Bonus.

Members noted that the budgeted contribution to reserves had been held around 15%, with the target that had been set in the previous year being achieved and the Schedule of Fees and Charges had been virtually untouched with a very few minimal increases during the financial year. Councillor Gray reported upon the robustness of the 2017/18 budget and MTFs and review by the Council's Responsible Financial Officer that had demonstrated that managers had been prudent in the delivery of their services and the Council's costs had been firmly under control.

In turning to the setting of the Council Tax base, Councillor Gray reminded Members that the level of Council Tax had not been increased for four years and although reluctant to introduce an increase, it was necessary to ensure the affordability of any increase. With this in mind, it had been proposed to increase Council Tax by 2% for 2017/18 but reduce the Council Tax increase to 1.5% for each year of the MTFs.

Attention was drawn to the impact on the budget of various changes within services, including savings achieved within the Operations Division and investment in resources providing further employment opportunities, savings in reduced insurance premiums and additional income generated through the Commercial Investments Strategy (CIS). Councillor Gray highlighted past and future budgets of spending and funding, by drawing attention to income from Council Tax growth and business rates, together with the impact of the reduction of the New Homes Bonus and Revenue Support Grant but also demonstrated that the cost to deliver the Council's services had decreased in a controlled manner.

Members were reminded of the success of One Leisure and the surplus that had now been achieved, with credit owed to the Executive Leader and Councillor J M Palmer and achievements with investment in the CIS that had added over £0.5m to the overall budget. Councillor Gray further reported upon the Treasury Management Policy Statement and informed Members that the investment activities had been deemed low risk with the ability to access the investments should the need be required.

In concluding his presentation, Councillor Gray reminded Members that the Council had managed to achieve a surplus budget whilst maintaining a productive level of reserves, with the capital programme under control and the Council in control of its debts. It was considered that the service delivered had been of a high standard and a significant amount of work had been undertaken over the past five years to make it more effective and efficient, with the focus now on development of the income streams of One Leisure and the CIS.

Councillor Gray moved the recommendations which were duly seconded by the Executive Leader, Councillor R B Howe.

In response and on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Mrs S J Conboy thanked the Executive Councillor for his informative and clear presentation and in so doing drew attention to the considerable achievements,

whilst reminding Members of a failed proposal by Councillor M F Shellens in the previous year to increase the level of Council Tax by 2% as it was felt that delivery of the budget at this rate was unsustainable. In outlining her concerns, Councillor Mrs Conboy questioned what steps had been put in place to ensure that the Council would not be issued with a Section 114 Notice under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and raised the issue of Unitary status for authorities going forward. In response Councillor Gray reported that the role of the Responsible Finance Officer was to err on the side of prudence and caution and, as such, he was confident that the expenditure was lawful and the budget balanced. He further reported that there had been other earmarked reserves available that could be redirected to support revenue expenditure should the need arise.

Councillor D A Giles congratulated the Executive Councillor on his clear and succinct budget presentation and reported that he was pleased to see the support for the illegal poster campaign removal, together with the turnaround of One Leisure and additional funding to tackle homelessness. With this in mind, Councillor Giles indicated his support for an increase in Council Tax to support such initiatives going forward.

In congratulating the Executive Councillor on the clarity of his presentation, Councillor S Greenall paid tribute to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers) in consideration of the draft budget, but outlined his concern for the significant level of expenditure of £108k allocated to replace the Civic Suite Audio equipment.

In response to a question from Councillor J P Morris on the issue of a press release advising that the Council Tax would be increased by 2% in advance of the decision taken by the Council that he felt was disrespectful, Councillor Gray explained that the press release had been drafted to detail the recommendations being considered by the Council and had assured Councillor Morris that there had been no intention to pre-determine the decision or to be disrespectful.

Councillor B S Chapman thanked the Officers involved in presentation of a successful budget and indicated his support for the additional resources in the Economic Development Team and questioned whether the Council had given consideration to development of a property development company in operation at East Cambridgeshire District Council for its commercial investments. Councillor Gray reported that this option was currently under consideration by the Treasury Management Group.

Councillor M F Shellens echoed the congratulations of the previous Members but outlined his concerns in relation to various uncertainties, specifically the level of inflation assumption, level of returns of the CIS, new duties that may arise through the retention of business rates, pensions and demands for housing. However, Councillor Shellens had agreed with the basic strategic approach and congratulated the managers involved.

Councillors D B Dew, J D Ablewhite, D M Tysoe, S Cawley and Ms S L Taylor also contributed to the debate that followed, with particular mention of the ongoing capital investments at One Leisure and the requirement to maintain investment at the Leisure Centres to compete with other providers and highlighted a major concern that some Town and Parish Councils had been setting their precepts as high as the District Council, with Huntingdon Town Council exceeding the District Council.

Councillor Gray concluded in response to the comments made by Members that he had shared a similar nervousness regarding inflation and it had not been possible to retain the reliance on grant funding as they would not continue at the same rate as inflation. He also intimated his uncertainty regarding the CIS, but had assured Members that the plan had been delivered for this financial year and would continue in its development.

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

- (a) that the proposed overall Budget 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2018/19 to 2021/22 (Appendix 1) to include the Revenue Budgets at Section 2, the Capital Programme at Section 3 and the 2017/18 Fees and Charges (at Section 7, Annex A) be approved;
- (b) that an increase of 2% in Council Tax for 2017/18 be approved, i.e. the Band D Charge will increase to £135.84
- (c) that the Council note the Council Tax Base for the whole Council area and individual Towns and Parishes (para 6.2) as approved on the 22nd December 2016 (and subsequent publication as a key decision).

**The tax base T which is the amount anticipated £60,111
from a District Council Tax of £1 is**

- (d) that the following amounts calculated by the Council for 2017/18 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 **£83,864,136**
Gross revenue expenditure including benefits, Town and Parish Precepts
- (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 **£69,967,795**
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 **£13,896,341**
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 2017/18 divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act **£231.18**
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 **£5,730,673**
The total value of Parish/Town precepts included in i and iii above.
- (vi) the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2017/18 being item iv less item v divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act. **£135.84**
The District Council’s Band D Tax for 2016/17
- (vii) the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2017/18 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 22nd February 2017.
- (viii) the amounts to be taken into account for 2017/18 in respect 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 22nd February 2017.
- (e) 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 be noted.
- (f) 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 2017/18 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.***
- (g) 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 2017/18 is not excessive. ***The basic amount at b(vi) above is not excessive as defined by the Government.***

Tax Base 2017/18

Abbotsley	252	Holywell-cum-Needingworth	972
Abbots Ripton	133	Houghton & Wyton	792
Alconbury	562	Huntingdon	7,335
Alconbury Weston	285	Kimbolton & Stonely	590
Alwalton	119	Kings Ripton	81
Barham & Woolley	28	Leighton Bromswold	81
Bluntisham	738	Little Paxton	1,555
Brampton	1,830	Morborne	10
Brington &	162	Offord Cluny & Offord	502
Molesworth		D'Arcy	
Broughton	90	Old Hurst	99
Buckden	1,168	Old Weston	90
(incorporating Diddington)			
Buckworth	50	Perry	261
Bury	615	Pidley-cum-Fenton	162
Bythorn & Keyston	144	Ramsey	2,785
Catworth	153	St Ives	5,859
Chesterton	58	St Neots	10,908
Colne	355	Sawtry	1,809
Conington	66	Sibson-cum-Stibbington	224
Covington	45	Somersham	1,357
Denton & Caldecote	27	Southoe & Midloe	152
Earith	587	Spaldwick	245
Easton	76	Stilton	773
Ellington	238	Stow Longa	67
Elton	288	The Stukeleys	442
Farcet	524	Tilbrook	120
Fenstanton	1,161	Toseland	39
Folksworth &	353	Upton & Coppingford	82
Washingley			
Glatton	132	Upwood & The Raveleys	422
Godmanchester	2,421	Warboys	1,368
Grafham	237	Waresley-cum-Tetworth	144
Great & Little	122	Water Newton	45
Gidding			
Great Gransden	451	Winwick	42
Great Paxton	365	Wistow	220
Great Staughton	324	Woodhurst	157
Haddon	25	Woodwalton	81
Hail Weston	249	Wyton-on-the-Hill	418
Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	48	Yaxley	2,898
Hemingford Abbots	335	Yelling	152
Hemingford Grey	1,278		
Hilton	453	TOTAL	60,111
Holme	225		

(h) that future savings targets of £1.4m of Net Expenditure by 2021/22 (Appendix 2) be approved; and

- (i) that the 2017/18 Treasury Management Policy, Strategy & Indicators and the Annual Minimum Revenue Policy (Appendix 3) be approved.

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

For the Motion – Ablewhite, Alban, Baker, Boddington, Brown, Bucknell, Bull, Butler, Cawley, Chapman, Conboy, Corley, Criswell, Davies, Dew, Dickinson, Donaldson, Francis, Fuller, Gardener, D Giles, S Giles, Gray, Greenall, Harrison, Hayward, Howe, Kadewere, Mathews, Mead, Morris, Palmer, Shellens, Swain, Tavener, Taylor, Tuplin, Tysoe, Underwood, Wainwright, West and White.

Against the Motion – Hyland and Reeve.

Abstentions – None.

66. QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Arising from a question by Councillor P Kadewere from residents of Kings Ripton Road, Huntingdon, the Executive Leader, Councillor R B Howe undertook to obtain further detail from Councillor Kadewere outside of the meeting and address the issues.

In response to a question by Councillor D B Dew on the inclusiveness of public involvement of the Local Plan review, Councillor R Harrison explained that the Council had been working to a tight timetable and an announcement would be forthcoming later that week on the Strategic Transport Strategy (STS) that would be communicated to all Members. Councillor Harrison also undertook to circulate the full technical details, as well as the STS to all Members.

Councillor T Hayward referred to two motions that had been presented to the Council over the past 18 months on the A1 and the level crossing at Buckden and asked for assurance that correspondence had been sent to the highest Minister in Central Government, not the Members of Parliament, in relation to these issues. Whereby, Councillor Harrison reported upon a forthcoming meeting in Milton Keynes the following week to discuss the A1 with Highways England and J Djanogly, Member of Parliament (MP) for Huntingdon. It was further reported that discussions on the level crossings were at a crucial stage and the Council had been awaiting a report from Network Rail before responding further and Councillor Harrison undertook to ensure that the appropriate correspondence was communicated to the MP and Minister.

Arising from a question by Councillor R Fuller in relation to breaches of planning and enforcement issues with the access road from Hemingford Road to the old golf course site in St Ives, Councillor G J Bull had explained that he had been made aware of the breaches and undertook to investigate the use of enforcement powers with the potential breach of conditions in this location.

Councillor B S Chapman referred to the growth in the District and the ensuing problem with the increase in litter and questioned what action was being taken to address the problem. In response Councillor J White explained that it was a national problem and drew Members attention to a Keep Britain Tidy campaign that was being run on the 4th/5th March 2017 that was designed to encourage local communities to tackle the problem of littering. It was further reported that

the Operations Division had invested in new equipment to help address the issue and a Street Cleansing Plan had been developed to tackle such problem areas.

Councillor S Greenall reported upon the recent decision to consult on the closure of Waitrose in Huntingdon and his subsequent petition and questioned what the Cabinet was doing to assist the retention of such retail outlets in the market towns as well as encouraging new businesses. Whereby, the Executive Leader, Councillor R B Howe, explained that the welfare of the market towns was a strategic priority of the work of the Combined Authority and the St Neots Masterplan would be developed as a template for use in other market towns. He further reported that there had been engagement with stakeholders in the towns and had met with Huntingdon BID to address support for retail at a higher level, of which the Council had assisted with the decision not to increase car parking charges this year and would continue to engage and develop strategies to enable market towns to continue to flourish.

In response to a question from Councillor M F Shellens on the reported cuts to the National Health Service with the closure of smaller hospitals and measures taken to ensure such facilities remain in our community, Councillor Howe undertook to take up this issue outside of the meeting.

Arising from a question from Councillor P D Reeve on the lack of regular comment from Cambridgeshire County Council on planning applications and requested that the matter be explored with Senior Officers, Councillor Bull undertook to pursue this issue with Officers at the County Council.

Councillor D A Giles raised a question in relation to the delay in replacement of a road sign in Eaton Socon following damage, whereby Councillor White undertook to investigate the issue and provide a written response.

Arising from concerns raised by Councillor Ms S L Taylor in relation to overhanging trees located near Hen Brook, St Neots, Councillor White reported that the debris from the trees had been assessed for flood risk and there was a programme in place for removal within the next few weeks.

67. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

(a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Update

The Executive Leader, Councillor R B Howe, provided an update to Members on progress to date with the work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. Whereupon it was noted that the second meeting of the Combined Authority had met earlier that day and approved a provisional budget for 2017/18 to 2020/21. It was noted that the costs of the Mayor's office had risen to £1m and the Mayoral election costs risen to £1.2m to accommodate the costs for distribution of the candidates address booklet. A further two posts had been created to facilitate the Housing Development Strategy as currently no officer capacity existed.

Members noted that the Combined Authority had been tasked with the development of new policies, fulfilling the legal and governance arrangements and developing the assurance and monitoring framework to ensure the processes are transparent and robust. Councillor Howe further highlighted the work streams that would be covering major project areas of governance, fiscal policy,

infrastructure, housing and skills and work programmes would be developed to allow housing and infrastructure related projects to progress.

Councillor Howe referred to the unblocking of sites allocated for housing to allow for the development of affordable housing and a number of large infrastructure projects under consideration that would be considered by the new Investment Board, Chaired by Councillor Howe with external expertise to adjudicate on infrastructure plans to come forward with recommendations for investment. Attention was also drawn to the Market Town Strategy and development of the Masterplan for St Neots, whereby it was reported that contact had already been made with Councillor Ms A Dickinson and St Neots Town Council.

It was noted that although the organisation was working very well, the Officers involved had been very stretched across all the local authorities and work had begun to recruit to the Chief Executive and other paid posts at the Combined Authority. Councillor Howe explained that through the smart management of resources and better use of public service, including health, social care, fire and police, economies and efficiencies could be achieved by the Combined Authority through the leverage of funding from other agencies.

In referring to the eight sites allocated for housing, Councillor Ms S J Conboy enquired as to whether they had been identified in addition to the Local Plan, whereby Councillor Howe explained that they had already been identified in the Local Plan and it was hoped that growth could be accelerated on these site through the unblocking of infrastructure that currently impeded some developments.

In response to questions from Councillor M F Shellens, Councillor Howe explained the background to the changes in the budget and overall costs to the Combined Authority and reported that a reserve level set at £800k may be deemed a little excessive and the intention was to ensure that the allocation of £20m was depleted as little as possible with the establishment of the Mayor's office but was confident that income generated in five years' time would far outweigh the original allocation of funding.

Arising from a question by Councillor B S Chapman, Councillor Howe explained that the focus of the Combined Authority was within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area only but development taking place on the fringes of these boundaries needed to be taken into consideration in the development of projects such as the St Neots Masterplan and would ensure that infrastructure kept pace with housing development.

(b) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Protocol

Consideration was given to a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a copy of a protocol to allow for the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority to provide a briefing report to each meeting of the Council outlining the activities and decisions of the Combined Authority. The Deputy Leader, Councillor G J Bull,

explained that this would allow Members an opportunity to ask questions on the work of the Combined Authority. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the protocol to enable the Council's appointee to provide a briefing report/update to each meeting of the Council outlining the activities and decisions of the Combined Authority and to enable Councillors to ask questions for a response or comment on concerns or issues be approved.

(c) Combined Authority (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017 - Appointment of Returning Officer

In conjunction with a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Deputy Leader, Councillor G J Bull, outlined to the Council the requirement to appoint a Returning Officer responsible for organising and delivering the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections in Huntingdonshire. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Managing Director be appointed as Returning Officer for the Huntingdonshire area for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections in Huntingdonshire to be held in May 2017.

68. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18

In compliance with the requirements of Sections 38 - 43 of the Localism Act 2011, Councillor S Cawley, Executive Councillor for Transformation and Customers presented a report by the HR Business Partner (LGSS) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in connection with the District Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.

The Statement, which is required to be approved by the Council by 31st March 2017 was now produced annually and detailed the Council's policies relating to Officer remuneration.

Accordingly and having noted that a copy of the Pay Policy Statement would be publicised on the Council's website along with data on senior salaries under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011, it was moved by Councillor Cawley, duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that the Policy Statement for 2017/18 be approved.

69. INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

The Council considered a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising consultation that had been undertaken on proposed changes to the Council's Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places following the completion of a recent review of electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary

Commission for England (LGBCE) of Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. In so doing, the Deputy Leader, Councillor G J Bull, informed Members that Group Leaders had been consulted on the report and the proposed changes to polling districts must be made to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting.

In the ensuing discussion, Councillors B S Chapman, D A Giles and Ms S A Giles referred to their disagreement with the new boundaries within St Neots and lack of consultation, whereby it was explained that full consultation was undertaken by the LGBCE on changes to the electoral arrangements and had already been imposed by way of Order and the report presented was to enable the amendment of polling districts in line with these changes. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the following changes be made to the Council's Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places –

- (a) that a new polling district (CT) be created in Huntingdon as the new electoral division boundaries of Huntingdon North and Hartford division and Godmanchester and Huntingdon South division are not coterminous with the existing polling district boundaries of CJ and CH to allow for electors in this polling district to vote in the correct electoral division as shown on the map attached at Appendix B;
- (b) that electors in the area affected by the lack of coterminosity by the new District wards of Huntingdon North ward and The Stukeleys ward not being coterminous with the existing polling districts of CP and CR be moved from CR to CP on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 as shown on the map attached at Appendix B;
- (c) that a new polling district (EX) be created in St Ives as the new electoral division boundaries of St Ives North and Wyton division and St Ives South and Needingworth division are not coterminous with the existing polling district boundaries of EC and ED to allow for electors in this polling district and new town ward of Beech to vote in the correct electoral division as shown on the map attached at Appendix C;
- (d) that electors in the area affected by the lack of coterminosity by the new District wards of St Ives East ward and St Ives West ward not being coterminous with the existing polling districts of ED and DY be moved from ED to DY on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 as shown on the map attached at Appendix C;
- (e) that a new polling district be created in Fenstanton for the Fenstanton South parish ward as the new County electoral divisions are not coterminous with the new District ward boundaries in this area and the remaining electors in polling district BJ re-named as Fenstanton North parish ward to be created on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 to ensure that elections can be run using the new boundaries. A copy of the map detailing the boundaries is attached at Appendix D;
- (f) that polling district EL be amended to be coterminous with the new St Neots Priory Park Town ward on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 to ensure that elections can be run using the new

boundaries as shown on the map attached at Appendix E;

- (g) that a new polling district be created for the new St Neots Church Town ward and polling district EJ be amended to be coterminous with the new St Neots Priory Park Town ward on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 to ensure that elections can be run using the new boundaries as shown on the map attached at Appendix E;
- (h) that polling district EN split by the new District Wards of St Neots Priory Park and Little Paxton ward and St Neots Eatons ward be amended to be coterminous with the new St Neots Eaton Ford Town ward and a new polling district be created for the Crosshall Town ward on publication of the revised register on 1st December 2017 to ensure that elections can be run using the new boundaries. A copy of the map detailing the boundaries is attached at Appendix E; and
- (i) that a separate polling district FQ be created for Alconbury Weald to take account of the continued planned development as shown on the map attached at Appendix F.

70. ELECTORAL CYCLE OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Consideration was given to a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the results on consultation undertaken to move the electoral cycle of all Town and Parish Councils to coincide with whole District Council elections from May 2018. The Deputy Leader, Councillor G J Bull, explained that if some Town and Parish Councils remained on their current cycle it could expose them to higher costs for running an election. With this in mind, Councillor Bull moved and it was duly seconded by Councillor R Fuller that the following amendment be made to the recommendations set out in the report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager –

That the words “with the exception of St Ives Town Council, St Neots Town Council and Warboys Parish Council” be deleted from recommendations (a) and (b) and recommendations (c) to (e) be deleted.

Councillor Mrs S A Giles outlined her disgust with the proposed amendment to overrule the Town Council and Councillor B S Chapman indicated his confusion with the financial argument and suggested that the cost would be financially neutral. He expressed his disappointment of the lack of respect for all the residents of St Neots and suggested that it was an abuse of the democratic process.

In concurring with Councillors Mrs Giles and Chapman, Councillor P D Reeve referred to the importance of Town and Parish Councils in local communities and suggested that if their elections remained combined with the District Council then electors were more likely to vote on party political grounds.

Councillor D A Giles reported that the Councillors had been elected to serve a four year term and appreciated the need for economies but as the Town Council paid for the elections the term should remain for the four year term. Councillor J E Corley suggested that these proposed amendments would destroy all credibility and would not be supported by the residents of St Neots. Councillor Ms S L Taylor similarly outlined her disgust with the proposed

amendments.

In response, Councillor Fuller explained that it was equally undemocratic to allow a six year term for Warboys Parish Council and qualified the suggestion that the Town Council paid for the elections, in fact the residents of the parish paid for the elections.

After discussion and upon being put to the vote the Motion was declared to be CARRIED. Councillors Chapman, Corley, D Giles, S Giles, Reeve and Taylor voted against the motion.

Councillor Chapman moved and was duly seconded by Councillor D A Giles that recommendation (d) remained. Whereupon being put to the vote the Motion was declared to be LOST.

It having previously been moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Fuller, in respect of the substantive motion upon being put to the vote it was further

RESOLVED

(a) that an Order be made under section 53 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to set the date of ordinary elections for all Town and Parish Councils as 2018 and every four years thereafter; and

(b) that an Order be made for transitional provision to reduce to term of office of Town and Parish Councillors elected in 2015 and 2016 so that their term of office comes to an end in 2018.

(At 9.40pm, Councillors Chapman, D Giles, S Giles and Taylor left the meeting and did not return).

The Chairman restored order to the meeting following a request from Councillor T Hayward.

71. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

Having regard to a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in respect of the terms of the Members' Allowances Scheme which provided for an annual adjustment of allowances in accordance with the automatic index mechanism of 1%, the Council

RESOLVED

that there be no increase in Members' allowances in the financial year 2017/18.

72. OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS

A copy of the list of meetings held since the last meeting of the Council held on 21st December 2016 is appended in the Minute Book and Members were advised that any issues or questions could be raised in relation to these meetings.

73. VARIATIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes to report.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.

Chairman