

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER / STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 15 December 2022

PRESENT: Councillor M J Burke – Chairman.

Councillors T Alban, M L Beuttell, A M Blackwell, R J Brereton, S Bywater, S Cawley, S J Conboy, A E Costello, S J Criswell, L Davenport-Ray, D B Dew, I D Gardener, C M Gleadow, J A Gray, J E Harvey, M A Hassall, P J Hodgson-Jones, S A Howell, N J Hunt, A R Jennings, P A Jordan, M Kadewere, P Kadewere, D N Keane, J E Kerr, C Lowe, R Martin, S R McAdam, B A Mickelburgh, D L Mickelburgh, S Mokbul, J Neish, Dr M Pickering, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, D J Shaw, R A Slade, S L Taylor, I P Taylor, D Terry, C H Tevlin, S Wakeford, N Wells and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Banks, E R Butler, J Clarke, S J Corney, S W Ferguson, K P Gulson and G J Welton.

40 THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A 'Thought for the Day' was presented by Councillor T Alban.

41 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 20th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M Burke declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item No. 5 by virtue of his employment by the Meridian Trust.

43 CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council noted those engagements attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair since the last meeting (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), subject to inclusion of an event attended by the Vice-Chair in the opening of a Warm Space in Huntingdon on 13th December 2022. He further reminded Members of his Carol Service taking place on 19th December 2022 and extended an invite for all to attend.

The Chair referred to the recent death of former Councillor Derek Giles who retired as a District Councillor in May 2022 having served as a councillor for 27 years. The Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, paid tribute to the former

councillor, emphasising his ongoing support for his community and offered her sympathy and sincerest condolences on behalf of the Council to his wife, Sandie, former colleague, and his family. She also placed on record her gratitude for his service to the residents of Huntingdonshire.

Councillor J A Gray extended his condolences on behalf of his Group to former Councillor Giles' family and referred to his recent attendance to receive his award as Honorary Alderman and appreciated his style of receipt in accepting the award that was typical of his style. He had the passion to serve his community and was at the forefront where decisions locally were being made and conveyed his best wishes to his wife Sandie and family and should be proud of the person Derek was.

Councillor T D Sanderson echoed the sentiments of Councillors Conboy and Gray and commended Derek as a magnificent servant over the years that he was elected.

Councillor I Taylor referred to his and Councillor S Taylor's first meeting of Derek during his campaigning many years ago, encouraging his participation as a councillor. He was an active fundraiser and will be forever grateful for all that he taught him as a person who will be sadly missed and never forgotten.

44 PETITION

(Refer to Minute No. 42 for Members' Interests)

The Vice-Chair invited Mr K Medlock to present a petition submitted on behalf of 1273 signatories regarding the closure of Sawtry Swimming Pool.

The Petition Statement was as follows –

“Sawtry are losing their swimming pool at the end of 2022, swimming is a life essential for everyone, but especially our children. They will now be expected to travel to either Huntingdon or Peterborough. We are asking for Huntingdon District Council to use some of the council tax we pay to subsidise the running costs of the pool.”

Mr Medlock opened his address by referring to the Meridian Trust with overall responsibility for the site but indicated that he felt that the District Council had some responsibility in the position that they were now being faced with. He explained that the petition had been presented to the District Council as Meridian Trust would not engage with the residents of Sawtry in the hope that an open meeting could be held with the Parish Council but had been refused and the District Council had been responsible for giving away their leisure facility, including the pool.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Meridian Trust had sub-contracted the facility to Stevenage Leisure until Covid had hit and money had been spent on updating some of the facility, but attention had not been focussed on urgent items such as the pump room servicing and possible renewable energy options. Mr Medlock outlined suggested costs of servicing the pump room, installation of solar panels and a solar thermal air sourcing heating option under a spend to save heating

options could have all been explored to enable the longevity of the facility and not influenced by the energy crisis affecting everyone.

Mr Medlock referred to the expenditure of £2.6m by the Council on the facility since 1992 and a further £80k provided when it was transferred to the Trust. It was understood that the plant room had not been maintained, resulting in operational implications. He further referred to swimming being one of life's essential skills and drew Members' attention to the Department for Education's stipulation that it should form part of the school curriculum for every Primary School child. He outlined his concerns with families without access to a car and the declining public transport service that served the village accessing other swimming pool facilities in Huntingdon or Ramsey.

In concluding, Mr Medlock urged the Council to take-back the leisure facility, or consider taking back and sub-contracting to a provider with the expertise of running such a facility with pools.

The Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, raised a question regarding how many times he had approached the Trust for a meeting and in response he explained that he had emailed Sawtry Parish Council to organise an open meeting and they had responded by explaining that they had refused.

Councillor S Bywater referred to the difficulties that closure of the pool would have on the residents of Sawtry and surrounding villages, particularly with an expanding population in the village, and the fact that the District Council had invested £629k in this facility since 1993. He reminded Members of the history of the transfer of the facility in 2019 that was deemed the best option for the Council to save the leisure facility. He further outlined his concerns for accessing facilities elsewhere for families with no access to transport and concern for people accessing safe areas to learn to swim. He urged the Joint Administration to revisit this issue and decide how to support the residents of Sawtry and surrounding villages and how they would interact with Meridian Trust to keep the pool open, with a view to taking this forward in the Spring.

Councillor R Martin referred to over 1400 signatures that had supported the petition to encourage the retention of such a facility and the importance of such a facility in teaching children to swim. Attention was drawn again to the capital expenditure used to build the facility initially that would be disappointing for the District Council to write-off. As former Chairman of Sawtry Parish Council, he explained that he personally had reached out to Meridian Trust for a meeting but they would not engage with the Parish Council, nor residents. Councillor Martin urged the Administration to put pressure where possible to save the swimming pool, or at least work in the Spring to re-open the pool.

Councillor T D Alban referred to impact of closure on the residents in the Stilton, Folkworth and Washingley Ward, as well as the economic impact of not visiting the leisure centre and village, as well as surrounding villages, as residents travelling to use Peterborough facilities may impact on the loss of extra money being spent in the Huntingdonshire economy.

In conclusion and in responding to the points and questions raised by Mr Medlock and Councillors, the Executive Leader appreciated the passion and commitment of those that participated in the debate, as well as those that had

signed the petition. She noted the desire to have met with the Trust and was disappointed that this had not been met with an offer. The Executive Leader undertook to facilitate such a meeting with the Trust, initially a private discussion, before facilitating a public meeting, with a view to understanding the challenges that the Trust have been facing and what the options there are as it remains their asset.

45 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Monitoring Officer reported that there had not been any public questions received by the deadline for consideration by the Council.

46 BRIEFING FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY

The Chair welcomed Chief Inspector Paul Rogerson with Cambridgeshire Constabulary who, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), briefed Members on community policing. He opened the presentation by referring to an open offer to all Members for him and his Team to run cluster group sessions amongst parishes to discuss any specific issues. With particular focus for some of the new Members, Chief Inspector outlined to Members what local policing looked like, local priorities and how Members could help.

Members were appraised of the structure of local policing team, with two command units shared with three other Cambridgeshire authorities and in Huntingdonshire the small Teams based in St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon hubs, with Huntingdon shared with the Yaxley hub. He explained the neighbourhood policing involved engagement and understanding what communities needed, problem solving and partnership work and targeted activity and making sure the right resources are targeted in the right areas.

Attention was drawn to crime trends over the past five years and in general it was noted had been stable, but had seen an increase in drugs offences, weapons and hate crime. Chief Inspector informed Members of a quarterly online community engagement meeting and open survey that outlined the balance to be struck between difficult problems and local problems. He concluded by highlighting to Members where they could help, in particular Members would know where the issues were, urged Members to contact him and his Team and lastly subscribe and follow what they do so this could be highlighted to the communities that they represent.

In response to a question from Councillor C Lowe on the reasons for a decrease in dwelling burglaries as they were not being reported as it was suggested that the Police were not visiting such incidents, Chief Inspector confirmed that they had seen a downward trend that may be as a result of an increase of people working from home and he indicated that they had committed to visiting all individuals that had been affected by dwelling burglaries.

Councillor L Davenport-Ray commended the Team after going on walkabout with her several times in St Neots and given the limited resources in the Team, she questioned how the staff resources were allocated to the areas in the District, whether it was based on crime rates or population. Chief Inspector responded by

referring the number of vacancies that he was recruiting into, with a new intake in January.

Councillor D B Dew commended Chief Inspector Rogerson for his ongoing support over many years, with particular reference to support in his ward experienced some years ago and reported that he had met with him and the residents and answered the difficult questions. With this in mind he encouraged all Members to take up the opportunity to meet with the Chief Inspector and his Team.

Councillor T D Sanderson referred to the problems being experienced in the Market Square, Huntingdon and referred to a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit specific activities in the area and encouraged everyone to report such crimes to enable resources to be targeted to such areas.

Councillor T D Alban referring to a Facebook post by the Police regarding parking problems and ticketing in St Neots but was not unique to the Towns and was seeking reassurance that resources would be targeted to address similar issues with parking and speeding in some of the more rural villages.

Councillor C Gleadow commended the local support Team after a recent visit to their base and encouraged Members to do similar to encourage a good rapport moving forward and in response to a question on the types of weapons it was confirmed that the increase in weapons referred to knives.

Chief Inspector Rogerson confirmed that they had been actively discussing the PSPO with the District Council with a view to taking a joint decision on the matter. In terms of understanding communities and responding, he welcomed Members to join the Teams in the door-to-door work to engage, particularly focusing on the areas where there were not active discussions taking place.

In his capacity as a new councillor, Councillor N Hunt referred to women and girls feeling unsafe in and around Huntingdon High Street and questioned whether there were any immediate actions that could be taken to make them feel safer. In response, Chief Inspector reported that a number of individuals were in receipt of Community Protection Warnings and several of which had been breached that they were in the process of prosecuting, and he indicated that they been working closely with the Streets and Open Spaces Team in an attempt to manage the anti-social behaviour, as well as CCTV, Business Against Crime and Town Rangers working together to tackle these issues. He urged such incidents to be reported so that the necessary resources can be targeted appropriately.

In response to a question from Councillor C Tevlin on the visible police presence in the villages, with managing the expectations of residents and managing priorities to demonstrate that they are making a difference, Chief Inspector explained that much of their resource is committed to the difficult crime issues such as county lines, child exploitation and modern day slavery but conversely would target specific resources towards activity that they know would make a difference in terms of areas that people are concerned about and highlight this through social media and the press to demonstrate that they have listened.

In concluding, the Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, thanked Chief Inspector Rogerson for his attendance and commended the support of his

colleagues over the years, particularly with regard to training that had been undertaken amongst Members and Chief Inspector confirmed his support for similar training for the new intake of Members to support them in their communities with some of the practical challenges.

47 BUDGET PRINCIPLES

With the assistance of a report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, Cllr Brett Mickelburgh, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, set out the council's Budget Principles ahead of the 2023/24 Budget to be considered by the Council in February 2023. Members noted that details of the final settlement from Central Government was not expected now until the end of December 2022 and Councillor Mickelburgh highlighted the difficulty in publishing a budget based upon assumptions at this stage was likely to be confusing, but had committed to work collaboratively with the opposition to benefit all of the residents.

Members' attention was drawn to the budget principles that had guided the budget preparation for 2023/24, together with a review of the resident's opinion survey to ensure that the Council was listening and responding to concerns in shaping policies and priorities. It was noted that the results would be used to inform the budget setting process as the Council worked to develop proposals for 2023/24 and beyond.

In response to a question from Councillor J Harvey on how the reserves would be built up again for the next administration if used for the duration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Councillor Mickelburgh explained that it was not the intention to make use of all of the Council's reserves as it was anticipated that this would be balanced with a steady income and expenditure stream.

Councillor A Jennings drew attention to the support for some of the budget principles, whilst highlighting concern for the principle of increasing fees and charges and the uncertain effect on demand, as well as the Council's commercial property investment may be impacted with the suggestion that properties outside of the Council's boundary would be disposed of given the fact that £2.8m had been receipted by the Council in the first six months of 2022/23. He further highlighted his disappointment that the findings of the resident's survey had not been shared with all Member in advance of the meeting and the difficulty with considering the findings of what residents had indicated were their priorities.

In response, Councillor Mickelburgh acknowledged the late presentation of results and undertook to take these comments on board. In drawing attention to the legal requirement to produce a balanced budget and the proposals for fees and charges, he explained that it was important for Overview and Scrutiny to hold the Administration to account, not just from a pricing perspective but also in terms of all the other services provided by the Council. Members were informed that the Executive Councillor had reviewed the Commercial Investment Portfolio when after he had been appointed and confirmed that it contained a useful mix of property that contributed to the ongoing costs of the Council. Despite this, with interest rates increasing there continued to remain a lot of uncertainty with the market for next year and with that in mind Councillor Mickelburgh explained that

this was the reason why the decision to hold back on any further investments for the time being had been put forward.

Arising from a question from Councillor N Wells as Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee with concern for the management of risk and reference to the previous Section 151 Officer's guidance that the Council may be holding too much property impacted by the recession, loss of rental income and depreciation in property value and how the budget principles would be managing this risk, Councillor Mickelburgh explained that the decision to pause commercial property investment activity had been directly related to managing that risk. He further explained that it was not possible to sell any of the property portfolio to fund budget gaps in the same financial year.

In response to a question from Councillor D Shaw on consideration of funding of the Climate Strategy, Councillor Mickelburgh explained that the impact of any changes required would be funded from within the operational budget of the services and would also explore consideration of potential green commercial investments as part of the Council's commitment.

Councillor J A Gray raised a question in relation to what the acceptable level of reserves and disputed the statement that was presented that in an inflationary environment it was not good to proceed with commercial investments as income was linked to RPI and rents were rising by RPI of some of the existing portfolio. He further stated that the Administration had been continuing the policy of the previous Administration as there had not been any investment in the Commercial Investment Strategy since 2019. In response, Councillor Mickelburgh reported in an ideal world it was preferred that a surplus was achieved by the end of the MTFS but in reality, it was hoped to be as close to zero as possible. In relation to the Commercial Investment Strategy, he confirmed that it was risky to invest further at this stage and further complicated by the change in rules of the Public Works Loan Board and inability to loan to produce a yield through investment of properties outside of the District.

In response to a question from Councillor P Hodgson-Jones on the budget approach to new areas for income generation and asked the Executive Councillor to be mindful of efficacy in terms of looking at the impact of expenditure and whether it delivered what was required by delivering services well. Councillor Mickelburgh confirmed his agreement of identifying other opportunities, particularly in light of the increase in energy costs and would explore such options moving into the next financial year.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council received the findings of the resident engagement survey and endorsed the budget principles as set out in the report now submitted to be used to shape the budget for 2023/24.

48 TREASURY MANAGEMENT SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report by the Council's Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book)

providing a six-month update in respect of treasury management activity for the period 1st April to 30th September 2022.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor B Mickelburgh, reported that the Council had not taken on any new loans in the past six months and the loan by the Council to Places for People had been repaid early. He further reported that

In conjunction with the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Executive Councillor reported that he was working on providing better clarity and reporting of such financial reports that would be designed to assist Members in understanding the content and would commence in the new financial year.

Councillor P Hodgson-Jones raised a question in relation to the table of loans detailed on page 28 of the report now submitted and whether the Public Works Loan Board loans listed were pre-paid on 5th October 2022 or whether the period in years referred to the original tenure of the loans, whereby Councillor Mickelburgh explained that this was the point that the loans were taken with the time of period remaining for the loan from that state. He further stated that further clarity would be provided in the next report following a request from Councillor Hodgson-Jones of the remaining tenure of the loans against the original period of the loans, so it clearly shows the maturity of the loans in coming years.

49 QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Arising from a question from Councillor N Hunt on the recent decision taken by the Cabinet to increase fees and charge at One Leisure and the rationale and measures taken to monitor usage, Councillor S Taylor, Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Streetscene, referred to the rising costs in utilities, staffing and other operational expenditure in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the rationale to offset the rising costs in 2022/23. It was further explained that new utility tariff price was £530k, representing an increase of 88% of the original approved budget. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) and Cabinet approved the pricing option to increase fees by 8.7%, but not including concessions, that was based upon a competitive benchmarking exercise and advice by UK Active, together with expertise of Senior One Leisure Officers. Members were advised that if the price increase was not implemented it would result in an estimated deficit of £275k in 2023/24 and thereafter £300k for the remaining duration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28. Councillor Taylor concluded by explaining that any footfall decreases would be monitored alongside usage and new memberships with a further report back to Overview and Scrutiny, as well as the development of a new Business Strategy next year to ensure the sustainability of One Leisure.

Councillor M Pickering raised a question with regard to the Local Growth Fund bid that had been submitted for Ramsey, whereby Councillor S Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing, reported that £1.15m had been successfully secured, complementing other funding already secured and would be working with Ramsey Town Council in the coming months in its development.

In response to a question by Councillor A Jennings on plans to provide short-term parking provision for less than a minimum two hour stay, as well as the

usual December parking campaign for 'free after 3pm' to encourage visitor to the town centre in St Neots, Councillor S Taylor, Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Streetscene, undertook to provide a written response to the two hour stay or less provision and explained that the 'free after 3pm' was removed from the budget in 2018 and would undertake to revisit this decision. He further referred to Councillor Taylor's campaign leaflet to remove parking charges from the Riverside Car Park, St Neots but Councillor Taylor confirmed that in the current climate it was not possible to pursue.

Councillor R Slade raised a question in relation to the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Provision in the District, whereby Councillor S Taylor, Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Streetscene, provided the background to the implementation of CPE and further updated Members that the date of implementation had been reviewed by Cambridgeshire County Council based upon their available resources and need for them to confirm funding for project delivery, with a revised date for implementation in Huntingdonshire now scheduled for October 2024 and the Council's website has been updated to reflect these changes.

Councillor D B Dew raised a question with regard to the delegation of decisions in planning, with confusion amongst Members in terms of discretion to bring applications to the Development Management Committee (DMC) and whether this was being exercised correctly, as well as an inconsistency of planning applications being called into the Committee and confusion amongst Members and Parish Councils. In response, Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, confirmed that the adoption of new Scheme of Delegation was approved by DMC on 14th October 2019 and was mindful of additional delays in determining applications should they be required to be submitted to DMC. Alongside this, Councillor Sanderson referred to the removal of amendments to applications resulting in a reduction in applications coming through to DMC and would be monitoring this with a view to providing a further update as appropriate.

In response to a question from Councillor C Tevlin on the timetable for the review of the Local Plan and how councillors and residents would be engaging in the process, Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, referred to the importance of community engagement in the Local Plan review process and the legally required process would be set out in the Statement of Community Involvement that would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) and the Cabinet in January 2023 detailing engagement with communities and stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils, community groups, planning agents, residents as well as District Councillor engagement. He further referred to ongoing discussions with the Planning Policy and Communications Teams for the initial phase of engagement, including online engagement and face to face sessions.

Arising from a question by Councillor C Lowe on progress with the B1040 Wheatsheaf crossroads improvement scheme, Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, reported that in the 2020/21 financial year £500k of Community infrastructure Funding had been allocated, although reduced now since its allocation and had contacted the Director of Highways at Cambridgeshire County Council to ask that this safety project be delivered as soon as possible.

Councillor J Neish raised a question in relation to Members of the Development Management Committee (DMC) having a full understanding and knowledge of policies when engaged in debate of refusing or accepting Officer recommendations in reports. Whilst commending Planning Officers reports and the reasons in their reports he questioned whether the Executive Councillor had full confidence in the Planning Officers as he had voted against 14 applications at the recent DMC meetings without any material planning reasons. In response, Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, explained that he had provided material planning reasons as it was against St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and confirmed that he did have full confidence in the Planning Team.

Councillor R Brereton on progress with the speed in determining consent of conditions after planning approval and referred to concerns expressed by Ramsey Town Council as to delays being experienced in the commercial site Northern Gateway, Ramsey and delays being imposed to deliveries on-site and knock-on effect to the commencement on site due to these restrictions which may impact of the expansion of economic growth in the area if these conditions continued to be imposed. Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, explained that Officers had been in discussion with the applicant with a suggested way forward but had not been productive and welcomed further discussions on the matter with Councillor Brereton.

Referring to the answer to the question presented earlier by the Executive Councillor for Planning on his actions at recent meetings of the Development Management Committee, Councillor J A Gray asked the Executive Leader to reflect on these recent decisions given as it was his understanding that national polices and Local Plan take precedence over the decision presented by the Executive Councillor. The Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, recalled that it was difficult decision-making process as Members were presented with the applications as a single presentation that had resulted in cumulative impact and indicated that she was always keen to reflect on such experiences. With this in mind, and mindful of the large number of inexperienced Members, such meetings can be challenging to remember all applicable policies and further training for all councillors would be provided.

50 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE, RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER - RECOMMENDATION FROM SENIOR OFFICERS COMMITTEE

Councillor S J Conboy, Executive Leader, presented a report as Chair of the Senior Officers' Committee held on 24th November 2022 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the proposed appointment of an Interim Managing Director following the retirement of Joanne Lancaster as Managing Director in February 2023.

The Executive Leader confirmed that, in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet had no objection to the offer of the appointment to Oliver Morley, whereupon it was moved, duly seconded and

RESOLVED

that Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People), be appointed as the Council's Interim Managing Director and Head of Paid Service, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer on an interim basis from 1st March 2023 for a fixed term ending 31st August 2023.

51 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - UPDATE

In conjunction with the decision summaries of the recent meetings of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Councillor T D Sanderson presented an update of their activities. Copies of the decision summaries are appended in the Minute Book. Attention was drawn to three main issues of the approval of £1.15m of funding for Great Whyte improvements in Ramsey, linked to the Local Growth Fund, reference to the call-in of the Transportation Infrastructure Committee decision relating to the Demand Responsive Transport that operated in the west of the District that was unsuccessful and the Implementation Plan.

Councillor L Davenport-Ray referred to her disappointment with the call-in decision that resulted in contractual risks to the service that operated as a lifeline to many rural residents that affected Huntingdonshire residents alone and not the District relating to the subject Member that called-in the decision and hoped that the Improvement Plan set out to improve the behaviour of Board Members. In response Councillor Sanderson confirmed that the contractual arrangements were found to be in order and shared similar concerns with the call-in and it was hoped that fewer incidents would be seen in future.

In response to an update requested by Councillor J A Gray on the investigation of the Mayor and conveyed his best wishes to the Mayor of the Combined Authority in his recuperation. The Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, shared similar concerns of this impacting on the ongoing functioning of the Combined Authority and reported that the absence of the Mayor after his surgery had not impacted on delay to the presentation of the outcome report but Officers had advised that due process needed to be followed and could not provide a definitive timescale for conclusion of the matter but had urged for this to be quick, but fair and proper. She undertook to share the detail of the timescale when further detail emerged.

In conjunction with a PowerPoint presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Councillors M Hassall and D B Dew provided an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, highlighting the Improvement Plan and Improvement Board in place led by Lord Kerlake and consideration of the budget. Attention was also drawn to confusion surrounding the ability of the Mayor to precept at 2% and clarity was being sought on the mechanisms to achieve this.

Councillor T D Alban raised a question in relation to what monitoring is undertaken on the funding provided by the Combined Authority to Housing Associations for housing projects and Councillor Dew undertook to provide a written response after the meeting.

Members were provided with an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Audit and Governance Committee by Councillor M Beuttell and

highlighted issues that they had been appraised with the Improvement Plan framework, risk register improvement, Improvement Board led by Lord Kerslake and highlighted issues with the Combined Authorities' Constitution with the signing off of the draft Statement of Accounts and provision for this in the absence of the Mayor.

52 OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS

A copy of the list of meetings held since the last meeting of the Council held on 12th October 2022 is appended in the Minute Book and Members were advised that any issues or questions could be raised in relation to these meetings.

In response to a question raised by Councillor R Martin to the Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee he requested a review of the Council's Constitution to include recognition of a Shadow Cabinet, clarity on how the Council scrutinises the Administration and setting out how to deal with motions and amendments, Councillor N Wells undertook to take the issue away for further review.

53 COMMITTEES AND PANELS

On the recommendation of Councillor J Kerr, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships), Members were appraised with details of the request for a change in the name of the Panel to better reflect the role and remit of the Panel and the needs of the District.

Having been advised that the Panel confirmed their support for the name change at their meeting on 1st December 2022 and in noting Councillor P Hodgson-Jones' request that consideration be given to a clearer constitutional process for such changes in future, it was

RESOLVED

that the name of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) be amended to the new name of Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships).

The meeting ended at 9.44pm.

Chair