

## 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 Wednesday, 22 February 2023

PRESENT: Councillor M J Burke – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, B S Banks, M L Beuttell, A M Blackwell, R J Brereton, S Bywater, S Cawley, J Clarke, S J Conboy, S J Corney, A E Costello, S J Criswell, L Davenport-Ray, D B Dew, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, C M Gleadow, J A Gray, K P Gulson, J E Harvey, M A Hassall, S A Howell, N J Hunt, A R Jennings, P A Jordan, M Kadewere, D N Keane, J E Kerr, C Lowe, 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, G J Welton and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors E R Butler, P J Hodgson-Jones, P Kadewere and R Martin.

### 54 THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A 'Thought for the Day' was presented by Ms Christine Green.

### 55 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th December 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 56 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

### 57 CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair referred to the recent death of former District Councillor Paul Ursell who had served nine years as a District Councillor for the St Neots Eynesbury Ward. Following further tributes from Councillors Dew, Ferguson and Jennings, Members then observed a moments silence in memory of the former Councillor.

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).

Members were reminded that to mark the anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and to show the District Council's support to the nation, the Council would be raising the Ukrainian Flag at Pathfinder House on 24th February 2023. This would be followed by a national one-minute silence.

## **58 RETIREMENT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR**

The Chair reminded Members that this would be the last meeting of the Council attended by the Managing Director Joanne Lancaster before her retirement at the end of the month. Tributes were then made by Councillors Conboy, Gray, Sanderson, Cawley, Wakeford, West and Neish before Mrs Lancaster was presented with a gift and scroll on behalf of the Council.

Having been moved by Councillor Conboy, it was unanimously

RESOLVED

that the Council place on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Joanne Lancaster for the dedicated manner in which she has served as Managing Director for the District of Huntingdonshire for the years 2013-2023.

## **59 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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

## **60 FINAL 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2024/25 to 2027/28)**

In conjunction with a report by the Director of Finance and Resources and a PowerPoint presentation (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), Councillor B Mickelburgh, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources presented to Members the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28, the Fees and Charges schedule for 2023/24, the Treasury Management Strategy, the Capital Strategy, the Investment Strategy, the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2023/24 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 2023/24 for various parts of Huntingdonshire District.

By way of introduction, Councillor Mickelburgh proceeded to set out the guiding principles which had been used to put together the Budget for 2023/24, highlighting the current economic situation, referring to comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in relation to fees and charges that would be reviewed through 2023/24 and explaining that the proposed Council Tax increase of 3.31% was the lowest since 2014. He further appraised Members with the difference between the budget and MTFS, explaining that the latter proved the Council was financially viable over the five-year period. Members noted that the budget proposed for 2023/24 was a balanced budget, without the requirement for use of reserves or cuts to front line services. This was largely attributable to the recruitment of an excellent Section 151 Officer and receipt of the Revenue Support Grant being higher than expected, further New Homes Bonus payments and retention of more money than expected through National

Non-Domestic Rates. Furthermore, the higher inflation had led to higher interest rates which on average would generate an additional £950k.

Members' attention was drawn to the impact on the MTFs, specifically the impact of inflation resulting in higher prices and ensuring sustainability in the budget with sufficient income without the reliance on Government grants. In the year ahead, Councillor Mickelburgh explained that there would be a Commercial Investment review and opportunities for service transformation projects, but also the requirement to react to Government changes such as the requirement to make weekly food waste collections that would have a direct impact on service delivery.

Councillor Mickelburgh moved the recommendations which were duly seconded by the Executive Leader Councillor S J Conboy who reserved his right to speak. In so doing, reminded Members that the budget and MTFs, through the previously agreed budget principles, proposed to continue to deliver front line services to residents, businesses and communities. With demand for services increasing, the pressures on the budget remained and welcomed the proposals for service transformation and using technology to delivery services more efficiently. She further appraised Members with the proposal to work more in partnership with key agencies to help those in crisis earlier and quicker. Attention was further drawn to the ambitious agenda with delivering the Place Strategy, Local Plan refresh and Climate Strategy but was confident that the proposed budget sought to underpin the Council's strategic objectives and priorities, whilst still protecting front line services.

In response and on behalf of the Conservative Group, the Leader of the Principal Opposition Group, Councillor J A Gray thanked Councillor Mickelburgh for his presentation and explanation of the rationale. He echoed the sentiments of Councillor Mickelburgh in supporting the comments on the excellent performance of the Section 151 Officer, Karen Sutton, as well as credit to her Team supporting her. He further referred to the considerable continuity of the budget as a complement in its approach to reserves, Commercial Investment need for review and welcomed contributed to this throughout the process. Councillor Gray outlined their support for the increase in Council Tax and acknowledged that the external funding from the Government had benefitted Huntingdonshire and also enterprise with a growing District. In referring to the goal of self-sufficiency, rather than waiting for the announcement from Government, Councillor Gray alluded to risks with the position changing in the future with a potential change in Government at the next election and the rise in net spending from £17m for many years to £24.1m. He questioned how the net budget would be driven down to a level of £21m, that was highlighted through comments raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, with the budget allowed for salary increases for staff at a reduced rate compared to previous years that could mean a reduced salary increase to staff salaries or a reduction of staff, the latter of which would not seem sustainable with such an ambitious agenda.

Members noted their objection to the proposed green bin tax and suggested that there needed to be further debate through the Overview and Scrutiny process and the figure proposed for charging for a second green bin which would result in unintended consequences. Finally, in referring to the proposed new Corporate Plan, Councillor Gray highlighted that such plans would mean activity and new things resulting in expenditure and difficulty for Councillor Mickelburgh in

controlling the Place and Green agenda, whilst balancing all the other priorities. He further commended that the sound principles that had been developed through the Conservative administration had not been discarded or discredited and supported the sound budget, whilst reiterated his concerns with the MTFS, specifically the unnecessary green bin tax and had doubts about the deliverability of a reduction of net spending.

Councillor A Jennings echoed the sentiments of his Leader in the excellent work of the Section 151 Officer and her Team in putting together a comprehensive pack in line with the budget principles and thanked Officers involved and the Executive Councillor in allowing him to be briefed on the budget before consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Much of the content was supported, with almost £5m of extra funding available from Government for this year and the next, the budget principles were easier met with such additional funding. Concern was expressed again for the MTFS and fall in net expenditure and assumptions that could not be supported, including the compost tax that was announced in the media before Members had an opportunity to scrutinise the principle and increase in fees and charges in Operations by year four to £4.5m that was questioned as to where the additional income was to be secured from as it was felt that this could not all be attributable to the green bin tax. Concerns were also expressed in the future salary costs as highlighted by Councillor Gray being insufficient, in particular in Leisure and Health and reliance's on rent income in year three onwards that could be untested assumptions.

Councillor Jennings referred to the inappropriate use of Officer time in presenting an alternative budget at this point in the electoral cycle and as the recommendations included approval of the MTFS and the levying of additional taxes on residents, he reported that it could not be supported.

Councillor S Wakeford referred to questions raised with the former Executive Councillor, Councillor Gray, in the previous year questioning why he was not more worried about the deficit in the MTFS and suggested evasiveness of the answer, he too had concerns regarding additional charges for residents and if suggested that if he was in their position this year, they may well have been proposing something similar. In referring concerns raised regarding the lack of oversight of the proposals for the green bin tax through Overview and Scrutiny, Councillor Wakeford explained that the detail would be presented in the normal way through the cycle of meetings. In concluding, he outlined his support for the proposed balanced budget and thanked the Section 151 Officer and Executive Councillor.

Councillor T D Sanderson congratulated Councillor Mickelburgh and the Section 151 Officer for the excellent work in delivering the balanced budget. In so doing, attention was drawn to the effect of the cost of living increases, rising inflation and poverty as a result that would explain why the expenditure had increased. He further referred to suggested savings that were presented in the previous budget by Councillor Gray and welcomed further contributions by the Conservatives on this who had worked hard on this at Overview and Scrutiny to ensure that this budget would be delivered and praised all Members for their contributions.

Councillor R J West reminded Members of the Section 151 Officer's conclusion that the Council had taken proactive action to address the budgetary concerns

whilst ensuring that the planned continuation of work to find efficiencies that the Council has a sound financial base upon which it can further develop its aim of financial self-sufficiency and hoped that the Administration did not lose that opportunity.

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

## RESOLVED

- a) that the proposed overall Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Appendix 1) to include the Revenue Budgets at Section 2, the Capital Programme at Section 3 and the 2023/24 Fees and Charges at Section 7, Annex A be approved;
- b) that an increase of 3.31% Council Tax for 2023/24 be approved, i.e., the Band D Charge will increase to £155.86;
- c) ***that the Council note the Council Tax Base for the whole Council area and individual Towns and Parishes (para 6.2) as approved by Chairman of Corporate Governance Committee and Section 151 Officer on the 6 December 2022 (and subsequent publication as a key decision);***  
*The tax base (T) which is the amount anticipated from a District Council Tax of £1 is £65,795.*
- d) that the following amounts calculated by the Council for 2023/24 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and associated regulations: -
  - i. the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act **Gross revenue expenditure including benefits, Town/Parish Precepts - £83,509,858**
  - ii. the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act **Revenue income including reimbursement of benefits, specific and general grants, use of reserves and any transfers from the collection fund - £64,785,038**
  - iii. the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act  
**This is the “Council Tax Requirement” including Parish / Town Precepts (item i minus item ii). It is the cash sum to be funded from District, Town and Parish Council Taxes - £18,724,820**
  - iv. the Council Tax requirement for 2023/24 divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act  
**District plus average Town/Parish precepts (item iii divided by District tax base) - £284.59**

- v. the aggregate of all “Special items” referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act.

**The total value of Parish/Town precepts included in i and iii above - £8,469,932**

- vi. the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 being item iv less item v divided by the tax base (T) in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act.

**The District Council’s Band D Tax for 2023/24 - £155.86**

- vii. the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24 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 2023/24 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 Parish Council amount for each of the valuation bands in the columns “bands A to H” set out in Table 1 attached.

- e) that the amounts of the precept issued to the Council by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire and 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;

- 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 2023/24 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) The Council notes that, in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 is not excessive. **The basic amount at b(vi) above is not excessive as defined by the Government.**

#### **Tax Base 2023/24**

Abbots Ripton	139
Abbotsley	268
Alconbury	545
Alconbury Weston	296
Alwalton	123
Barham & Woolley	30
Bluntisham	773
Brampton	2528

Brington & Molesworth	189
Broughton	101
Buckden (incorporating Diddington)	1337
Buckworth	53
Bury	782
Bythorn & Keyston	156
Catworth	166
Chesterton	66
Colne	392
Conington	75
Covington	47
Denton & Caldecote	30
Earith	604
Easton	84
Ellington	241
Elton	298
Farcet	536
Fenstanton	1343
Folksworth & Washingley	355
Glatton	133
Godmanchester	3144
Grafham	234
Great & Little Gidding	126
Great Gransden	506
Great Paxton	375
Great Staughton	344
Haddon	22
Hail Weston	244
Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	56
Hemingford Abbots	330
Hemingford Grey	1299
Hilton	451
Holme	257
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	1075
Houghton & Wyton	809
Huntingdon	7732
Kimbolton & Stonely	605
Kings Ripton	84
Leighton Bromswold	81
Little Paxton	1611
Morborne	13
Offord Cluny & Offord D'Arcy	549
Old Weston	107
Oldhurst	104
Perry	263
Pidley-cum-Fenton	197
Ramsey	3161
Sawtry	2046
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	237
Somersham	1410

Southoe & Midloe	158
Spaldwick	257
St Ives	6059
St Neots	11404
Stilton	797
Stow Longa	73
The Stukeleys	1266
Tilbrook	129
Toseland	38
Upton & Coppingford	94
Upwood & The Raveleys	450
Warboys	1608
Waresley-cum-Tetworth	145
Water Newton	39
Winwick	56
Wistow	228
Woodhurst	158
Woodwalton	82
Wyton-on-the-Hill	442
Yaxley	2997
Yelling	153
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,795</b>

h) that the 2023/24 Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategies, MRP Statement and Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy be approved (Appendix 2).

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

For the Motion – *Banks, Blackwell, Burke, Conboy, Davenport-Ray, Dew, Ferguson, Gleadow, Harvey, Hassall, Howell, Hunt, Jordan, Kadewere M, Kerr, McAdam, B Mickelburgh, D Mickelburgh, Mokbul, Pickering, Pitt, Sanderson, Shaw, Slade, I Taylor, S Taylor, Terry, Tevlin, Wakeford, Wells*

Against the Motion – *Alban, Beuttell, Brereton, Bywater, Cawley, Clarke, Corney, Costello, Criswell, Gardener, Gray, Gulson, Jennings, Keane, Lowe, Neish, Welton, West*

Abstentions - *None*

## 61 CLIMATE STRATEGY

In conjunction with a report by the Assistant Director Strategic Insight and Delivery (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment, Councillor L Davenport-Ray presented details of the Council's Climate Strategy. In so doing, she thanked those that attended the Climate Strategy sessions over the Summer and feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that had helped inform its development. Attention was drawn to the two main aims of the Strategy, to reduce the Council's

emissions to net zero by 2040 and use the position of leadership to encourage residents, businesses and other authorities to take climate action. In referring to the direct control over the first aim, Councillor Davenport-Ray suggested that the second aim could have a much greater impact on climate change globally.

With reference to the motion approved at Council on 12 October 2022 on the cost of living and climate crisis (Minute No. 22/34(b) refers) Members were informed that it was more than just cutting carbon and reducing global warming, it was concerning protecting the Council and residents from fluctuating fuel prices and the effects of extreme weather.

Members were appraised with details of the six objectives of the Climate Strategy that had been influenced by input from residents, businesses, Town and Parish Councils and young people and their top priority for tackling climate change was changing rules for new developments to meet sustainability standards, therefore the climate work must influence the Local Plan review, closely followed by a requirement for restoring nature and planting trees. This has resulted in the upcoming Biodiversity for All Programme to work with local communities to restore nature across the District. It was further explained that the six objectives had also been based on evidence with transport being the highest priority to focus upon in terms of carbon emissions.

Members noted that the Strategy also contained details of a trajectory of how the Council would lead operations to net zero by 2040, whilst ensuring that this was flexible as different technologies become available and evolve over the next 17 years and had resulted in a proposed annual review through a Climate Action Plan.

In referring to the budget for the Climate Strategy proposals, much of which was contained in the appropriate service areas annual budget as well as £150k allocated for a climate action accelerator reserve earmarked as necessary to unlock external funding. Members were further appraised with existing and proposed schemes throughout the District to tackle climate action.

Councillor T D Alban welcomed the proposal to build upon the green inheritance that had been left from when the Conservatives were in office and throughout the discussions on the proposals through Overview and Scrutiny it was evident that with changing technologies and solutions, the Council must be ready to adapt to that and welcomed the cross-party support tackling climate change. He highlighted his concerns with the ethical dimension of the proposals, as well as the reporting process, but was confident that these issues could be addressed through the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Councillor S Howell outlined her support for the Climate Strategy and referred to the three key Council priorities of shifting to a renewable energy system and reducing energy use, decarbonising the fleet and procuring wisely and fully supported the work with local communities to drive this change for more sustainable future.

Councillor S Cawley outlined his support for the Strategy and thanked the Executive Councillor for her time in briefing him in advance but reminded her of their discussions that it provided a good base, there needed to be more detail on the work to be done and how this was going to be achieved, whilst drawing attention

to the proposal of tackling a climate emergency was not immediately evident as one of the first actions would not commence until February 2024 and urged that consideration be given to identifying actions sooner rather than later.

Councillor J A Gray indicated his support for the Strategy with general recognition cross-party and alluded to potential missed opportunities with the budget as to whether actions needed to be taken faster to address the perceived lack of pace of tackling a climate emergency. He further welcomed the annual update and a feedback loop to a Group in Overview and Scrutiny.

Councillor S Bywater encouraged Members to continue with their moral duty to ensure that young people are engaged on this journey to continue to drive forward the change.

Councillor S Taylor thanked the Officers and Executive Councillor in the speed of compiling the Strategy and commended them for their hard work.

In concluding, Councillor Davenport-Ray thanked Members for their feedback, whereupon it was

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that the Climate Crisis and Ecological Emergency be formally recognised;
- (b) that the Council's Climate Strategy in response to the Climate Emergency be adopted;
- (c) that the initial Climate Action Plan, with annual refresh in conjunction with our communities, businesses and partners through the Climate Conversation, be adopted; and
- (d) that progress be reported annually to Overview and Scrutiny, with more frequent collaboration with the Overview and Scrutiny Climate Working Group.

## **62 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023-24**

In compliance with the requirements of Sections 38-43 of the Localism Act 2011, Councillor M A Hassall the Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services presented a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in connection with the District Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24.

The Statement, which is required to be approved by Council by 31st March 2023 and produced annually, details the Council's policies relating to Officer remuneration.

It was moved by Councillor Hassall, duly seconded by Councillor Shaw and

#### RESOLVED

that the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 be approved.

## **63 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Councillor N Wells, Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee, presented a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) proposing the appointment of up to two co-opted non-voting Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee, which was expected to be the subject of national legislation once parliamentary time permitted.

Having been advised of the intended benefits of the proposals including additional knowledge and expertise for the Committee, the Council were advised that the Corporate Governance Committee at their last meeting had given the Chair and Vice-Chair delegated authority in conjunction with the Committee to finalise the detail of the proposals ahead of the commencement of the recruitment process subject to Council approval.

It was moved by Councillor Wells, duly seconded by Councillor Hassall and

### **RESOLVED**

- a) that the appointment of up to two non-voting Independent Members to the Corporate Governance Committee be approved;
- b) that a variation to the membership of the Corporate Governance Committee as set out in Part 3 – Responsibility for Council Functions of the Council's Constitution be approved; and
- c) that the necessary amendments be made to the Council's Constitution.

## **64 QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

Arising from a question from Councillor M L Beuttell on the proposals for a green bin tax and concern with communication following the information being presented in the media before Overview and Scrutiny, the Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, explained that the MTFs did not contain the level of detail on the proposal at this stage as there were so many variables to consider, including awaiting the detail from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and explained that due process would be given to Overview and Scrutiny once this information was available for further consideration and welcomed their engagement.

In response to a question from Councillor D Mickelburgh on support for residents off-grid tackling the energy crisis such as those in mobile home parks and boats, Councillor S Ferguson, Executive Councillor for Customer Services, explained that the Government had announced two further energy support schemes to address these needs that included a £400 payment to residents in a mobile home or boat administered directly from the Government via a phone line to be launched on 27th February 2023 to claim. Residents without a mains gas connection, there would be a similar policy launched by the Government of a £200 payment available and an Officer had been appointed to support a project team to check the validity of the claims despite it being administered through the Government. He further reminded Members of this request to identify such residents in their ward to signpost them to this support scheme.

Following a question raised by Councillor S Cawley specifically raised by residents in his Ward in the village of Ellington and ongoing issues with Buffalood and requirement for Planning Enforcement action, Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Planning, welcomed sight of the issues and undertook to take up this issue with the Planning Enforcement Team.

Councillor D B Dew raised a question in relation to the timetable for the Local Plan re-launch and opportunity for Members to get involved, whereby Councillor Sanderson explained that there would be plenty of opportunities to get involved, starting with Overview and Scrutiny on 1st March 2023 that will consider the Local Development Scheme that sets out the scope of work for future development plan preparation setting out evidence based and supporting documents required as well as identifying the risks and resources involved in producing the Local Plan. Discussion will also be held at this meeting on the draft settlement and hierarchy methodology looking at call sites. He further reminded Members of the length of the process, at least for the next four years and beyond and welcomed contributions from all Members in the process.

Arising from a question by Councillor J Kerr on an update on One Leisure footfall since the price increases in January 2023, Councillor S Taylor, Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Streetscene, acknowledged that Councillor D Keane had contacted her raising the same question. It was reported that overall admissions across One Leisure facilities were up year on year by 209k and highlighted the main areas of growth in casual swimming, swim courses, sports hall and aerobic classes. Full details of the impact would be circulated to all Members after the meeting.

In response to a question raised by Councillor M Pickering on progress with the backlog of planning applications and planning enforcement, Councillor T D Sanderson highlighted that cases had been reduced and was proud of the work that the Team had achieved to date and reassured Members that with investment in the service he was confident that this would continue to improve.

Arising from a question by Councillor C Tevlin on the efforts by the District Council to tackle the cost of living crisis with the assistance provided for warm hubs and future plans for reviewing the warm hubs initiative particularly in the context of the Community Chest Grant Funding, Councillor B Pitt, Executive Councillor for Community and Health, reported upon the success of the national warm hubs initiative largely driven by residents and community groups. He drew attention to the preference for a legacy for this project which not only provided focus as a warm space but also provided support for community groups going forward. He referred to the Council's commitment to support these initiatives going forward, largely supported by the £500 grants through the Community Chest Grant Funding and explained that the criteria for such grants was under review.

Councillor A Jennings raised a question in relation to an update on the market towns initiative and whether the meeting on the St Neots Regeneration Project had taken place or the likelihood, following it being reported at the Council meeting in October 2022 that a meeting would be held to update Members. In response, Councillor S Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing, undertook to provide detail on the spend directly to Councillor Jennings

and further detail would be reported at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 1st March 2023. Councillor Wakeford was unable to provide the detail on the dates of the stakeholder meetings that had taken place.

Arising from a question by Councillor D Mickelburgh on an update of progress with Civil Parking Enforcement, Councillor S Taylor reported that the Council's website has been updated and a revised commencement date of October 2024 had been confirmed based upon a review by Cambridgeshire County Council of their available resources. It was further reported that on-street survey work in the District had been completed and a query list detailing where signs and lines were not up to standard or the restriction was unclear had been generated and submitted to the County Council and they had been working through the list to inform the remedial works required. Work was also underway with the draft Agency Agreement and Service Level Agreement between the District Council and County Council.

## **65 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - UPDATE**

In conjunction with the decision summaries of the recent meetings of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Councillor S J Conboy presented an update of their activities. Copies of the decision summaries are appended in the Minute Book. Councillor Conboy acquainted Members with details of their budget and financial management, the approval of a Mayoral precept to specifically fund bus franchising and work streams under the Improvement Plan and challenges for the Board to continue to work together. In response to a question by Councillor S Ferguson, Councillor Conboy assured Members that she would continue to use her influence on the Board to support bus services and not seek further cuts. Councillor J A Gray raised a question in relation to any update on the conclusion of the investigation of the Mayor and the impact that this was having on progress of the Combined Authority compared to other Combined Authorities, whereby Councillor Conboy reported that she had personally raised this with the Chief Executive and Improvement Board and urged them that the matter needed resolving that would also hopefully resolve the ongoing party politics issues.

Councillor M A Hassall provided an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and drew Members attention to the three main recommendations of ensuring the commitment of spending of bus services for the next two years, risk slippage on capital projects and the Mayoral precept, as well as highlighting further detail of the Improvement Plan and review to be undertaken on committee effectiveness.

Members were provided with an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Audit and Governance Committee by Councillor S Corney. Particular attention was drawn to their recent training on the process of holding a standards hearing, bureaucracy in relation to the procurement process and help for small businesses as well as the smaller parishes and reported friction from Ernst and Young directly related to the delay in getting document signed off in the absence of the Mayor.

**66 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS**

Following recent changes to the political membership of the District Council which had necessitated the need to make changes to the Council's nominations from the Conservative Group to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor J Neish be nominated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a replacement for Councillor D B Dew, with Councillor S Corney nominated as the new substitute member.

**67 OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

A copy of the list of meetings held since the last meeting of the Council held on 15th December 2022 is appended in the Minute Book and Members were advised that any issues or questions could be raised in relation to these meetings.

With reference to the recent meeting of the Employment Committee and the deferral of an item on time off for trade union duties, Councillor Cawley sought and received clarification that this would be given further consideration prior to the Managing Director's imminent departure, whereby she noted the reminder and committed to providing an answer.

**68 REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEES, ETC**

Following a recent change in the political membership of the Council, a report was submitted by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) relating to the principles and proportionality to be applied to the appointment of Committees and Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the allocation of seats on District Council Committees and Panels to political groups and non-aligned Members be determined as set out in the report now submitted.

**69 VARIATIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

Further to Minute Number 68 and the report on the representation of political groups on District Council Committees, on the recommendation of Councillor S J Conboy, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor D B Dew be confirmed as appointed and retained to the membership of the Development Management Committee as a representative of the Liberal Democrat Group.

The meeting ended at 9.48pm.

Chair.