



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Operational Services Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 4:30 pm On
Monday 23 September 2024

Present

Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr John Trapp (substitute)
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Kelli Pettitt
Cllr Alan Sharp
Cllr Ross Trent
Cllr Lucius Vellacott (Vice Chair)

Officers

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Ankers – ECSS Finance Manager
Nick Baker – Waste & Environmental Services Manager
Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Emma Grima – ECSS Director Commercial
Ian Smith – Director Finance
Catherine Sutherland – Waste Development and Support Manager

In Attendance

Annalise Lister – Communications Manager
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Karen Wright – ICT Manager

14. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted.

15. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christine Whelan.

Cllr John Trapp was in attendance as substitute.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17. Minutes

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that in the fourth paragraph of minute 9 of the meeting on 24 June 2024, Cllr Alison Whelan should be amended to Cllr Christine Whelan. Subject to this amendment, it was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced that after 34 years' service Liz Knox, Environmental Services Manager, was retiring. The Chair praised Liz for her wealth of knowledge, thanked her for her support and wished her a happy retirement. The Chair introduced Nick Baker, who would be replacing Liz Knox as Waste and Environmental Services Manager.

19. East Cambs Street Scene Ltd Financial Statements 2023/24 and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

The Committee considered a report, Z54 previously circulated, containing details of the East Cambs Street Scene Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.

The ECSS Director Commercial and the ECSS Finance Manager introduced the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

Cllr Christine Colbert asked that in appendix 2 on page 49 of the agenda the word "Dept" be amended to "Debt" and asked about vehicle insurance cover. The ECSS Finance Manager replied to Cllr Colbert that the company's vehicles were comprehensively insured. He provided details of an insurance claim made against the company following a road traffic incident. It was noted that the company was fully insured for such events, however a liability of this size needed to be disclosed in the accounts.

The ECSS Finance Manager replied to Cllr John Trapp that there had been a reduction in the recycling rebate value and this explained the drop in revenue. Tonnage had remained the same. It was noted that "Other Income" included costs that were recharged to the customer.

Cllr Mark Inskip expressed concern at the fact that some performance targets were not being met. The ECSS Director Commercial reported that new measures were being put into place to improve performance, but a decision may have to be made to either increase resources or review the targets. The Waste Development and Support Manager explained that the more accurate reporting of data would result in improved performance figures.

It was resolved to:

1. Note the East Cambs Street Scene Financial Statements 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Note the East Cambs Street Scene Annual Governance Statement as set out in Appendix 2.

20. Budget Monitoring Report for Quarter 1 2024/25

The Committee considered a report, Z55 previously circulated, which provided Members with details of the financial position for services under the Operational Services Committee.

The Finance Director presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

Cllr Mark Inskip expressed concern regarding the projected overspend in Planning services. The Director Operations explained that the overspend was largely due to a decline in the number of planning applications, although there were indications that more applications were expected later in the year.

It was resolved to:

1. Note that the Committee was currently projecting a yearend overspend of £135,000 on revenue, when compared to its approved budget of £7,134,292.
2. Note that the Committee has a projected capital programme outturn of £3,656,199, which was an underspend of £1,000,000 when compared to its revised budget.

21. Outside Bodies Representative Updates Report

The Committee considered a report, Z56 previously circulated, which recommended that lead representatives and a substitute be appointed to replace current representatives on three outside bodies.

Cllr John Trapp proposed and the Chair seconded that the votes be carried out via a secret ballot. A vote was taken and this proposal was agreed with 10 votes in favour and one abstention.

The Chair proposed and Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith seconded Cllr Martin Goodearl as a representative on the Community Safety Partnership. Cllr Mark Inskip proposed and Cllr John Trapp seconded Cllr Christine Wheeler for the same position. A vote was taken and Cllr Martin Goodearl was elected to this position by 6 votes to 5 votes.

The Chair proposed and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Alan Sharp as a representative with Citizen Advice West Suffolk. Cllr Mark Inskip proposed and Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann seconded Cllr John Trapp for the same position. A vote was taken and Cllr Alan Sharp was elected to this position by 6 votes to 5.

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Julia Huffer as substitute to the Cambridgeshire County Council Adults and Health Committee. There being no other nominations, Cllr Julia Huffer was elected to this position unopposed.

It was resolved:

1. To appoint Cllr Martin Goodearl to the Community Safety Partnership.
2. To appoint Cllr Alan Sharp to Citizens Advice West Suffolk.
3. To appoint Cllr Julia Huffer as a substitute representative to the Cambridgeshire County Council Adults and Health Committee.

22. Waste and Street Cleansing Service Proposals

The Committee considered a report, Z57 previously circulated, regarding the proposals from the Member Working Party for the future Waste Collection and Street Cleansing service.

The Director Operations presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions. It was noted that in the third bullet point on page 85 of the agenda regarding a free green waste collection service, the words “twice weekly” should be amended to “fortnightly”.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that more than 52 caddy liners should be provided to residents. The Chair explained that the Council would be providing free caddy liners for the first year only.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that the collection rounds be amended so that the vehicles collected food, non-recyclable and recyclable waste. The Chair explained that collection vehicles were very expensive and so it made financial sense to have specialist vehicles for the different types of waste collected.

The Director Operations explained that the fact that it took longer for waste operatives to collect wheeled bins instead of black bins had been factored in to the collection rounds. Members of the Committee recognised the benefits of wheeled bins as black bags could split and contain sharp items that were a hazard to collection operatives.

Cllr Mark Inskip stated that it was imperative that any changes to the service were fully communicated to residents. Cllr John Trapp suggested that residents should be informed of the savings being realised by the new scheme when being asked to accept it. The Chair stated that all councillors would have a role to play in ensuring residents understood the new scheme.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith recommended that all new properties had places to store their bins as part of a planning condition. The Chair added that alternatives would be offered to those properties which had no place to store their bins.

Members of the Committee commended the cross party working group for successfully investigating this issue and coming up with excellent recommendations.

The Committee unanimously recommended to Full Council:

1. That the Council implements the measures as detailed in section 4.3 - 4.5 of this report and collect food waste in a separate container, on a weekly basis by 31 March 2026.
2. That the Council implements the collection of residual waste in a 180lt wheeled bin on a fortnightly basis as detailed in section 4.3 - 4.5 of this report by 31 March 2026.
3. That the Council retains a free fortnightly garden waste collection service that is suspended for 6 weeks during winter and Christmas catch up period by 31 March 2026.
4. That the Council removes the annual subscription charge for a second garden waste bin from 1 April 2026.
5. That the Council removes the one-off charge for an additional recycling bin from 1 April 2026.
6. Instruct the Director of Operations to progress with the procurement of vehicles, caddies and bins required to implement 1. and 2. above by 31st March 2026.
7. That the Council approves the supporting mobilisation and communication plans as detailed in Appendices 3 and 4.
8. That the Council retain the current street cleansing service specification, with minor changes to ways of working set out in sections 4.19 - 4.21.
9. That the Council review the Street Cleansing specification in one year's time with regards to how it has enabled performance delivery against the Key Performance Indicators with ECSS (East Cambs Street Scene) to determine any new specification for implementation from 1 April 2026.

23. Waste and Recycling Policy 2026

The Committee considered a report, Z58 previously circulated, regarding the new waste and recycling collection policies and service standards to support the implementation of the proposed waste service.

The Waste Development and Support Manager presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

The Waste Development and Support Manager assured Cllr John Trapp that if bins could not be collected from the main road an alternative solution would be provided such as collecting the bins from the rear or having a communal collection point. Cllr Alan Sharp stated that the County Council did not always adopt roads especially with regards to smaller developments. The Waste Development and Support Manager agreed to liaise with colleagues from planning and provide guidance on the Council's policies regarding collecting waste from roads that had not been adopted, which would be circulated to all members of the Committee.

The Waste Development and Support Manager assured Cllr John Trapp that specific needs would be individually assessed when considering matters such as whether to provide extra black bin capacity. It was noted that separate collections would be provided for medical waste.

The Waste Development and Support Manager assured the Committee that guidance would be provided to residents on issues on such as whether fruit from the garden would qualify as food or garden waste.

Councillor Mark Inskip explained that the Working Party had recognised that the Policy would have to evolve as the new scheme was introduced.

It was resolved:

To approve the Waste and Recycling Policy 2026 and implement the policy in line with the roll out of new waste and recycling collection services in 2026.

24. Waste and Street Cleansing Service Delivery Model

The Committee considered a report, Z59 previously circulated, regarding the outcomes of the waste service review Working Party to inform the decision on the future delivery model for provision of waste collection and street cleansing services.

The Director Operations presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

The Director Operations assured Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann that the carbon footprint of the Waste Service was not considered by this report as it was only looking at the Service's Delivery Model and was covered in the waste collection and street cleansing

proposals report previously considered. It was agreed that this fact should be included in future reports.

Cllr Mark Inskip explained that the Working Party had considered going out to tender for an external provider or bringing the service in-house but had concluded that providing a formal contract with the ECSS was the preferable solution. Cllr Lucius Vellacott stated that the ECSS shared the Council's values and ensured a proper use of public funds.

It was unanimously recommended to Council to:

1. Approve the decision to proceed with using East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS) as set out in section 4.7-4.8.
2. Authorise the Director Operations to develop the service specification and, in consultation with Director Legal, prepare a new contracting arrangement to commence from 1 April 2026.

25. Quarter 1 2024/25 performance report for the Waste and Street Cleansing Services

The Committee considered a report, Z60 previously circulated, which provided Members with the Quarter 1 performance report for the delivery of the waste and street cleansing services by East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS).

The Waste Development and Support Manager presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

The Waste Development and Support Manager agreed to provide Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann with the conditions required for marina collections and whether the Market Square was being swept more than necessary.

Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann left the meeting at 5.49 pm.

Cllr Christine Colbert welcomed the breakdown of the complaints received and expressed the hope that these would be analysed to inform a better service.

The Waste Development and Support Manager explained that the District's recycling was no longer being taken to Waterbeach as that contract expired in August.

The Waste Development and Support Manager assured Cllr John Trapp that software was used to analyse missed collections and where dog mess bins needed emptying in order to tailor the service to meet the needs of the District.

The Director Operations explained that performance targets for the waste service had been agreed last year. These targets were challenging and so tolerance levels had been introduced to identify when the level of performance merited some form of intervention.

It was resolved:

To note the performance of service delivery for quarter 1 (April to June) 2024/25.

26. Notes of Waste Service Review Working Party for June and July

The Committee received the notes of the Waste Service Review Working Party for 10 June and 8 July.

It was resolved:

To Note the draft minutes of the Waste Service Review Working Party for 10 June 2024 and 8 July 2024.

27. Draft Minutes of Anglia Revenue & Benefits Joint Committee

The Committee received the notes of the Anglia Revenues & Joint Benefits Committee of 9 July.

It was resolved:

That the notes of the Anglia Revenues & Joint Benefits Committee of 9 July 2024 be noted.

28. Forward Plan

The Chair suggested that routine updates should not be formally discussed by the Committee and should be circulated to Members instead. Cllr Lucius Vellacott agreed, whilst acknowledging that significant issues should still be taken to the Committee. The Committee accepted this, whilst agreeing that Members should be able to request that specific updates come to the Committee if necessary.

29. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was resolved unanimously:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

30. East Cambs Street Scene Management Accounts for the 3 months to 30 June 2024 - EXEMPT

The Committee considered a report, Z61 previously circulated, which considered the ECSS Management Accounts for the three months to 30 June 2024.

It was resolved that:

The ECSS Management Accounts for the three months to 30 June 2024 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6:05pm

Chair

Date.....

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