

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on
Monday 13 June 2022 at 4:30pm

P R E S E N T

Cllr Julia Huffer (Chairman)
Cllr David Ambrose Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Anna Bailey (Substitute for Cllr J Schumann)
Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Alec Jones
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Jo Webber
Cllr Christine Whelan

OFFICERS

Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Lewis Bage – Communities & Partnerships Manager
Shaun Bradshaw – Operations Manager ECSS
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Tracy Couper - Democratic Services Manager
Richard Garnett – Senior Environmental Health Officer
Emma Graves-Brown - Neighbourhood and Community Safety
Officer
Richard Kay – Strategic Planning Manager
Karen See - Senior Environmental Health Officer

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Annalise Lister – Communications Manager
Melanie Wright – Communications Officer
Karen Wright – ICT Manager

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

9 public questions were submitted regarding the Waste and Recycling Collection Services and the questions and responses are detailed in Appendix 1 to these Minutes.

4. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Joshua Schumann and Cllr Anna Bailey was acting as Substitute Member and from Cllr Paola Trimarco.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interests were made by Councillors as follows:

Agenda Item 7 Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Update – Councillor Every as Chair of the CSP and Councillor Christine Ambrose-Smith as a Council representative.

Agenda Item 8 Environment Action Plan – Councillor Inskip as a member of East Cambridgeshire CAN

Agenda Item 9 Housing Enforcement Policy – Councillors Bailey, Christine Ambrose-Smith, David Ambrose-Smith, Every as rental property owners. It was reported that all of these Members had been granted Dispensations by the Monitoring Officer.

6. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 21 March and 19 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the Housing Model Member Seminar held on 25 May 2022 and reminded Members to complete and return the questionnaire sent to all Councillors following the Seminar.

8. VCAEC – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT UPDATE

The Chairman reported that this presentation would be deferred to the September meeting due to the inability of the Chief Executive of the VCAEC to attend the meeting as a result of sudden sickness.

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation by the Communities & Partnerships Manager and Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer on the structure and work of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a copy of which has been circulated to Members of the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Composition, structure and objectives of CSP
- Delivery Group
- Problem Solving Group
- CSP priorities
- Examples of current and recent activity
- Examples of emerging activities

Members commended the excellent work of the officers in progressing a wide range of initiatives across the whole of the District and in securing grant funding for the recruitment of a Preventative Problem-Solving Officer. In response to a question by a Member regarding a recent spate of vandalism in their Ward, the

Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer stated that incidents of anti-social behaviour such as vandalism should be reported to the Police, but it would be useful if herself and the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator also were made aware of them.

The Chairman thanked the Communities & Partnerships Manager and Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer for their presentation.

10. ECDC ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN JUNE 2022

The Committee considered a report, X11 previously circulated, containing the fully refreshed 3rd edition of the Environment Plan.

The Strategic Planning Manager explained that the Plan reviewed the top 20 actions set in 2021/22 and proposed new top 20 actions for 2022/23. In addition, the report set out options relating to an additional staffing resource required to deliver the actions and ambitions contained in the Plan.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes. The Strategic Planning Manager clarified that the annual Schools subscription for the accreditation scheme referred to in question 3 of Appendix 2, would be £495 for the first year and £350 for future years.

A Member commended the permanent appointment of the Strategic Planning Manager as an employee of the District Council referred to in the response to question 2 of Appendix 2. In response to a follow-up question, the Strategic Planning Manager explained further the figures and reasons relating to the question regarding how many of the 100 homes identified for LAD1b have had energy efficient improvements completed by 21 March 2022? How many are in progress? How many are not yet started? He stated that a more detailed response could be obtained from the Environmental Services Manager and circulated to Members of the Committee.

Similarly, further explanation was given on the question regarding electric vehicle charging points and it was stated that a more detailed response could be obtained and circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member referred to the potential handing back by the Combined Authority (CA) to Central Government of £100M of grant funding for home improvements which was being investigated by the CA Business Board.

In response to a question by a Member regarding 'No Mow May' for grass cutting, the Strategic Planning Manager agreed to obtain a response from the Facilities and Open Spaces Manager to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member raised the following questions submitted in advance but not received due the change of DSO for the Committee:

1. Page 36, Item 7. Does the target extend over all of the Council's activities, or focus only on the Grange? Should not all Council assets and activities be included?
2. Page 37, Item 9: has a strategy for the allocation of the £1.75M been formulated?
3. Page 39, Item 12: what criteria were used to select these three EVCPs? How will the EVCPs be managed to prevent parking of the car beyond the time that full charge has been acquired?
4. Page 41, Item 16: is there any evidence that PGH or CLTs have changed their energy efficiency standards in the past year? What are the plans for the forthcoming developments at MOD II and Paradise Pool to mitigate climate change?
5. Page 58, Appendix 3: 'non-potable' not 'non-portable'; 'non' omitted from second mention of 'portable'; meaning of SLR besides being applied to cameras?
6. Page 59: first, third and fourth measures could only conscribed by changes to the Local Plan.

The Strategic Planning Manager agreed to obtain responses to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member queried the benefits of Schools signing-up to the accreditation scheme and the Strategic Planning Manager stated that it was hoped that children would act as 'ambassadors', spreading the message and promoting climate change initiatives at home. The success of the scheme would be assessed at the end of the trial period.

Members commended the draft Plan.

It was resolved (unanimously):

That approval be given to:

1. the Council's third Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, dated June 2022 (as attached at Appendix A to the submitted report).
2. the establishment of a full time, permanent, Climate Change and Natural Environment Officer.

11. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Committee considered a report, X12 previously circulated, containing the draft Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

A Member also raised the following questions submitted in advance but not received due the change of DSO for the Committee, which were responded to by the Senior Environmental Health Officer as detailed:

1. Page 5: is the Council aware of all landlords, or only those against whom a complaint has been lodged? *Response: There is currently no Government scheme for a national landlord register. In addition to those we are aware of as a result of a complaint, our database holds details of HMO licenced landlords and those landlords known to the Housing Team.*
2. Page 12, last paragraph: the implication here is that the landlord will always have an agent. *Response: this can be amended for the sake of clarity.*
3. Page 27: penultimate paragraph: is the banning order on the landlord or the property? If a landlord has more than one property, is the banning order applicable for all properties? *Response: The owner is banned.*

A Member raised questions on identifying private sector landlords and dwellings, and methods of ensuring that tenants were aware of their rights and the assistance available to them. They commented that the Council's webpages on the issue appeared to be reactive rather than proactive. The Chairman suggested that the webpages could be reviewed to see if any improvements could be made.

A Member queried how many of the 5,633 private sector dwellings identified belonged to Housing Associations. The Director Commercial agreed to obtain a response from the Housing Team and circulate to Members of the Committee.

In response to questions on what constituted a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for licensing purposes, the Senior Environmental Health Officer confirmed that this was a property of 5 or more people in 2 or more households.

It was resolved (unanimously):

1. That the draft Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.
2. That the proposed new fee policies for Civil Penalties for Housing Act 2004 offences, Electrical Standards in the Private Rented Sector Regulations 2020, Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2007, Minimum Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015, and The Redress Scheme for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work Order 2014, on Pages 34, 36 and 38 in the main body of the Policy and in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the submitted report be approved.
3. That a consultation period of 8 weeks from 20th June 2022 be agreed.

12. FOOD AND HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

The Committee considered a report, X13 previously circulated, containing the revised Service Plan 2022/23 in accordance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and Health & Safety Executive.

In response to a question by a Member regarding the challenging workload associated with the Service Plan, the Senior Environmental Health Officer stated that whilst there was a great deal of work to be undertaken post-Covid, he had a

very capable and committed Team and was confident that they could meet the targets contained within the Plan.

It was resolved (unanimously):

That the Food and Health & Safety Service Plan attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

13. QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR WASTE & STREET CLEANSING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report, X14 previously circulated, detailing the quarter 4 Performance for Waste & Street Cleansing Services by ECSS for the period January to March 2022.

Members welcomed the new Operations Manager ECSS, Shaun Bradshaw, and noted that he would be unable to answer detailed questions relating to this quarter due to starting with the Council only very recently. However, any unanswered questions would be taken away and responses obtained and circulated to all Members of the Committee.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

The Chairman referred to recent critical Press and Social Media posts regarding Waste and Recycling collection arrangements, and made the following statement:

“As Shaun is new to ECSS and is not any position to answer any follow up questions, I would ask that if anyone has any follow up questions that they could be submitted to James Khan who will deal with them on his return from leave. I would like to make the following statement in response to the comments made by Councillor Inskip on social media over the last week with regard to the Waste Service.

Councillor Inskip has again taken to social media to call for action on the Waste Service demanding that there are management meetings to adopt his ideas with regards to the current situation.

I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight again.

Firstly, the National HGV shortage cannot have escaped anyone's notice. Councillor Inskip attributes our current staff shortages to wages. Actually, there is sickness among some of the crews which has resulted in 3 crews not able to get out in the last two weeks. Coupled with half term holidays it meant that at one point we were 7 drivers down.

The reference to the difference in salary paid to our drivers and that of a private business is based on a false assumption that the terms and conditions are the same. They are not, our crews are on Task and

Complete, a private company will be asking for a 37 or 40 hour week, we do not. There is no direct comparison.

Once again, the reference to the failure of the round configuration. "poorly executed" according to Councillor Inskip, frankly the minor tweak of 950 addresses out of 40 thousand households is not a failure, but a recognition that some rural rounds take longer than others. The assisted collections you refer to were addressed as soon as they were brought to the attention of the office staff.

Loaders and drivers over the years had been assisting some residents informally but these arrangements have now been formalised.

The In-Cab software that is referred to was being investigated just as Covid-19 struck so was put on the back burner, it has not been forgotten about and will be under consideration when things have settled down but it is not a cure-all and brings its own set of problems.

The timing of the reconfigured rounds could not be delayed any further as certain areas of the district were putting crews under unreasonable pressure.

There was never going to be a perfect time to do the reconfiguration, the summer brings its own issues with summer holidays and winter, the often-bad weather and increased sickness among crews.

So, to your demands Councillor Inskip:

There have been weekly meetings between John Hill, Anna Bailey, James Khan, Annette and myself for the last six weeks resulting in the following actions, with James Khan receiving daily support from John Hill and myself.

1-Additional management resources will be in place this week to assist James Khan and his team, they will be there as long as they are needed.

2-With effect from today an arrangement is in place with a Cambridge based recycling company who will pick up any missed collections and assist where necessary.

3- the Assisted Collection list has already been updated and will continue to be so as residents make contact.

4- There have been meetings between John Hill and the Union representative to ensure that the physical and mental well-being of all staff is being looked after.

5- We have been offering training to all staff since the service came back in-house not just in the last two years and to date it's been very successful, with our most recent successful candidate Justin Dillon passing his HGV test on Friday. As a result of Covid-19 the process now, instead of taking 3 months is currently taking anything from 9-12 months.

Agency staff have been sought and employed but it has not always been successful. This job is not for everyone with early starts, out in all weathers and dealing with things most of us would baulk at, personally, I salute each and every one of them. They have been magnificent under difficult circumstances we need to be supportive not critical.

I want you to be aware, Councillor Inskip that work has been going on tirelessly behind the scenes by hard working Officers to get the service back on track. Your constant criticism of what you regard as management failures does nothing to improve the morale of staff in the offices or those out on the rounds.

James Khan has in the last six weeks on more than one occasion spent all day in the office and then gone out in a vehicle to pick up missed collections after an agency driver lied about what he had done. Shaun has been out on many occasions acting as a driver and on one Saturday was responsible for single handedly collecting recycling bins in Fordham. I thank him and the whole team for their extraordinary efforts in the face of unusual levels of sickness and absence in the last two weeks.

I don't want you to think that anything that has been done or put in place has been done as a response to your criticism or suggestions, it was being done anyway because it was the right thing to do.

Just as a footnote, I notice that a tweet was sent about a chicken carcass covered in maggots that had been ripped from a black sack. Can I remind all residents that food waste should not be put into black sacks for that very reason. Food waste should go in the Green Bin wrapped in newspaper if possible. Personally, I have never had a black bag ripped open as I never put food waste in them."

The named Member then explained the background to his Social Media posts. He stated that he welcomed the news of the additional management support and additional short-term capacity and acknowledged the excellent work being undertaken by both loaders and drivers in very challenging conditions. However, he had examined why drivers were leaving and pay and conditions were a major factor. He had been approached by staff with their concerns and had seen the media reports by a former employee. Therefore, his action plan had been intended in the spirit of looking to address the issues raised. He genuinely believed that staff needed to be surveyed to obtain a proper assessment of their views, concerns, and the overall position on morale, to ensure that they felt listened to and to find a way forward. In addition, meaningful and current messaging was required to affected local residents, to ensure that they were aware of what was happening to address missed collections and when collections would take place.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Member for their explanation and action plan and gave an assurance that the issues raised were all being addressed. She expressed her pride at the service and performance standards of ECSS, which were a significant improvement on the previous contractor, and gave a

deep and heartfelt apology for the recent drop in service levels. These had been the result of a complex series of factors, including sickness absence due to Covid and other reasons, a shortage of HGV Drivers, round reconfiguration, but these issues were being addressed. This required both staff co-operation and the obtaining meaningful intelligence via consultation. These challenges were not unique to this Council, but were being faced by many Waste Collection authorities both locally and nationally. On the subject of recruitment issues, it was not possible to compare private companies to public sector operators. However, all aspects were being reviewed to bring the service back on track and it was hoped that all outstanding collections would be completed by the end of the current week. All Councillors were committed to returning to the 'gold standard' of service provided by ECSS until very recently and wanted to support Waste crews and staff who had been experiencing very tough times in recent weeks.

A number of Members commented on the need for improved and meaningful public communications on when missed collections in particular areas would be collected, due to widespread resident confusion. The Leader of the Council gave an assurance that the issue of public messaging was being considered, but Councillors could assist by advising the public to put their Waste out on the normal day and leave it there until collected. Mr Bradshaw stated that the clear-up Team was on schedule to complete all missed collections by the end of the week.

It was resolved:

That the quarter 4 Performance Report for Waste & Street Cleansing Services by ECSS for the period January to March 2022 be noted.

Councillor Jones left the meeting at 6.41pm and did not return.

14. ANNUAL REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered a report, X15 previously circulated, containing the annual reports of Council representatives on Outside bodies within the remit of this Committee.

A Member raised the following question submitted in advance but not received due the change of DSO for the Committee:

Page 6: one notes that there are no reports from the CAWS Lead Member. Is this through lack of attendance or through not submitting a report. Councillor Sharp mentions clashes of dates, and so would it be better to have representatives who are more able to attend?

Another Member queried the Council's representation on Citizen's Advice West Suffolk (CAWS).

The Democratic Services Manager agreed to investigate and provide a response to Members of the Committee on both issues.

In response to a question by a Member regarding the differing types of representation on Sports Centre Management Committees within the District, the Democratic Services Manager reported that this would be dependent on the content of the constitutions of each body.

A Member commented that outside body substitute representatives would not submit an annual report if they did not attend a meeting during the year, and that this should be reflected in the annual report summaries.

It was resolved:

That the annual reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies within the responsibility of the Operational Services Committee at Appendix 2 to the submitted report be noted.

15. ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the ARP Joint Committee meeting held on 1 March 2022 be noted.

16. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan. The Chairman reminded Members of the cancellation of 11 July 2022 Committee meeting and the need to add the VCAEC update presentation deferred earlier in the meeting to the Agenda Plan for the September meeting of the Committee.

It was resolved:

1. That the Forward Agenda Plan and cancellation of 11 July 2022 Committee meeting be noted.
2. That the VCAEC update presentation be added to the Agenda Plan for the September meeting of the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 6:47pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:

OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE 13 JUNE 2022
PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Waste Collections

**Wayne Braybrook
Witchford**

I'd like to submit a public question for the Operational Services Committee on 13th June please as an East Cambs resident (Witchford):

"Can the chair please explain why the refuse collections have gone so far awry with late or missed collections on an almost weekly basis since the change of routes, and what is being done to resolve the disruptions to the service?"

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce. ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

Mr Keith Squires

I have a question regarding the local bin collection in Witchford. Since you decided to change the collection day to 'reduce' the carbon footprint during these rounds I think we have only had one successful collection of both one of either the green or blue bin and black bag, every other week we have been at least one day behind the scheduled collection, and at least one collection was on our original day of collection on the Monday following, which is four days late. This is getting beyond a joke and this instead of reducing your carbon footprint you are potentially increasing it. I had the pleasure of speaking to one of the drivers of a collection wagon the other week now and he said that his wagon can only take 6ton of waste and the amount of houses now in Witchford and the increasing number being built this size of wagon will not be big enough.

So

How is this issue going to be resolved and how are you going to reduce the amount of missed collections?

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously. It is expected that when the rounds have settled, crews will be working efficiently and therefore provide the anticipated carbon reductions.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

The Gross Vehicle Weight of a collection vehicle is 26 tonnes. However, each vehicles tare weight is different depending on the type of waste it is collecting. Due to the nature of recyclable waste and the difficulty in compacting this type of waste, vehicles collecting blue bins cannot carry the same amount of weight as those collecting residual or green waste.

Mrs Vanessa Wheeler

As a resident of Witchford Village, I would like to know what the council are going to do to resolve the issue of the missed bin collections?

We have been a resident of Witchford, since December 2021 and the bin collection has been diabolical. It took several months for the green bin collection to be resolved, and now has been resolved (maybe?) but today (1st June) now the blue bin collection has been missed and according to reports, several drivers have turned in for work for various reasons.

We pay a lot of money toward the council tax and yet, the council seemed to not be able to fulfil its duty in providing an adequate bin collection?

When will the council start to look into the issues at the bin collection depot and let residents know what is happening and what they are going to do to bring the service up to scratch?

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

Employees are working overtime to catch up with outstanding collections and any spare resource deployed to assist.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

ECSS, the Council's customer service and communications teams are working together to ensure that information is shared with effected residents on a daily basis.

**Helena Akerlund
Sutton, Ely**

The refuse collections have not worked properly since the change of dates earlier this year, and I believe some issues started earlier than this. I understand that the issue is with lack of staff, and would like to know what is being done to rectify this. I have been informed that the HGV drivers' salaries are below market rate and that staff morale is low. What is being done to improve things?

Uncollected bin bags end up being ripped apart by animals and the rubbish spread by the wind all over people's gardens. It is unpleasant and unsanitary. Furthermore, non-collected full recycling bins mean people have to resort to putting recycling in the black bags thus reducing the already low recycling rates.

Thank you for your time.

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

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ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

Current rates of pay are comparable to those employed in similar job roles within the waste industry.

East Cambs recycling rate for 2021/22 was 56.6%. This rate saw East Cambs enter the top 25 authorities with the highest recycling rates in the country. Additionally, East Cambs has the highest recycling rate across all Cambridgeshire authorities.

Michelle Brown

Since changing our bin collection from a Monday to Thursday the collection has been very sporadic. Some collection has been made of either bin or bags but the last few weeks since change of collection day it has been a lottery if any/one or two collections will happen. Excuses vary week to week. Something needs to change surely?

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Nathan Jones

Could we please ask what is being done about the significant dip in service to the refuse collections in the East Cambs area, specifically Witchford as my home village. Since the collections change to Thursday the collections have become inconsistent and unreliable. Residents across the region are complaint and getting frustrated however the reasons given seem solvable with some better management of the service.

Before the date changes collections were reliable.

What is being done to publicly acknowledge the issue, it's clear there is one, and resolve it?

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

Employees are working overtime to catch up with outstanding collections and any spare resource deployed to assist.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

ECSS, the Council's customer service and communications teams are working together to ensure that information is shared with effected residents on a daily basis.

Sarah Waddelow

The bin collections in Witchford, Haddenham, Sutton and surrounding areas recently moved to a Thursday, from the original collection date of Monday. Ever since this change went into operation the bins have not been collected on time, usually 2-3 days late, leading to rubbish scattered across the road as bags are waiting several days for collection.

What do the Council intend to do to correct this issue? Especially as this service should be funded by Council Tax payments!

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

Employees are working overtime to catch up with outstanding collections and any spare resource deployed to assist.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

ECSS, the Council's customer service and communications teams are working together to ensure that information is shared with effected residents on a daily basis.

David Bainsfair

The bin collections have dramatically deteriorated since the change to a Thursday collection date, which was supposed to improve the service.

What does the Council plan to do to rectify the late collections? Especially as rubbish is left in the street for several days, as usually no one at the Council offices knows what date the collection is going to happen.

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

Employees are working overtime to catch up with outstanding collections and any spare resource deployed to assist.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

ECSS, the Council's customer service and communications teams are working together to ensure that information is shared with effected residents on a daily basis.

Keith McCourt **Resident at Witcham Toll**

This question is for the public services committee meeting. When is the waste collection issues going to be resolved?

To keep blaming labour issues is getting tiresome!

Where is the action plan to resolve the issue?

What is your standard operating practise for when you have a no show of labour?

Overtime - agency labour - labour linearity?

You have the results of an employee satisfaction survey and have done nothing to address any issues raised.

These amount of labour issues just reflects that you must be a very poor company to work for...

If this was a private sector company you wouldn't still be in your job roles with such an inept performance!

The implementation of round reconfiguration saw drivers and their crew collecting from areas they had not operated in before. This, as was anticipated, created a level of missed collections. As the rounds settle, and the crews become familiar with their new

collection areas, the frequency of missed collections will reduce and stability will return, as evidenced with the collections previously.

Additionally, substantial shortages of staff have caused difficulties in deploying crews on some scheduled collection days.

Employees are working overtime to catch up with outstanding collections and any spare resource deployed to assist.

ECSS is actively recruiting to its vacant HGV driver posts and is training current employees to become HGV drivers to provide further resilience to service delivery.

ECSS utilises agency workers to support the delivery of the services, especially during periods of staff absence. Due to the national shortage of HGV drivers, the supply of full time and agency drivers across the logistic industry is slim, increasing the difficulty to find suitable replacements.

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
13 JUNE 2022
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE**

All questions below have been submitted by Councillor Mark Inskip

Item 8 – Environment Action Plan 2022

<p>Page 2, para 3.4: Given the dominance of 'fleet vehicles' in the generation of the authority's carbon dioxide emissions, what confidence is there that the 20-33% reduction by 2025/26 can be achieved without a major shift from ICE vehicles to BEV or other low zero carbon propulsion technologies?</p>	<p>Since the first Environment Plan of 2020, it has been recognised that the Council's 'fleet vehicles' dominate its carbon dioxide emissions and reducing such emissions is very challenging in the short term (see detailed explanation in the Operational Services Committee agenda paper of 18 January 2021). It was the dominance (and challenge) of our fleet vehicles which influenced being only able to set a relatively modest CO₂e reduction target by 2025/26, of 20-33%. Nevertheless, that target remains a realistic one, primarily based on: (a) reducing our emissions from other sources such as our buildings, via energy efficiency measures and PV solar panel installations; and (b) maximising the efficiency of our existing fleet vehicles, via, for example the more efficient waste collection routes, once these have fully bedded in. In addition, our 'Action 7' for 2022/23 includes looking at the potential of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel for some/all of our fleet vehicles, at potentially a 90% reduction in CO₂e emissions compared with diesel. If this is practical and affordable, it would potentially mean substantially exceeding the 20-33% target by 2025/26.</p>
<p>Page 3, para3.13: What is the duration of arrangements with Peterborough City Council to continue to provide a Strategic Planning Manager in the 'service lead' role. Will these arrangements continue through to the whole period of the updated Environment Plan? And are arrangements also in place for future years?</p>	<p>ECDC has had an arrangement with Peterborough City Council (PCC) since late 2014, initially for just planning policy, but for the past 2-3 years to also cover wider environmental support. The current arrangement has an end date of 31 March 2023, though provisions are included for earlier termination by either party. For the past few months, PCC has been undertaking an internal review of its own planning services, and this has triggered the opportunity for the two parties to review the shared staffing arrangements. As a first step, from 9 June 2022, the ECDC Strategic Planning Manager 'service lead' (covering planning policy and the environment plan) is now a directly employed full time permanent ECDC post. At the time of publishing the agenda report in late May, this change was not confirmed, and therefore not reflected in para 3.13. Any further changes in the arrangements are a matter for discussion between the two parties over the coming months.</p>

<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 34: What will the annual subscription be for schools to remain signed up to the accreditation scheme in future years? What funding sources are available to them for future years?</p>	<p>Whilst the fees are set independent of ECDC, the typical present annual subscription on a single school basis is around £495 pa. Depending on the uptake and success of this current trial year subsidised by ECDC, then: (a) schools could simply subscribe directly themselves for future years; (b) ECDC could seek to secure a ‘bulk buy’ discount rate for East Cambridgeshire schools; or (c) ECDC could continue to subsidise, in whole or part, the annual subscription, up to a ceiling point. If schools fund the subscription themselves, it is unknown what funding sources are available to them to do this, though it is worth noting that the national curriculum is changing so as to have a greater emphasis on teaching about climate change and the natural environment from 2022, and the eco-schools programme could be a cost-effective way of meeting such new requirements (see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy-for-the-wider-national-climate-change-strategy-for-the-education-system, launched April 2022).</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 35: When is the log of the new grass cutting and wildflower management arrangements expected to be published in the council’s website?</p>	<p>We will target achieving this during summer 2022.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 36: What is the absolute reduction in the carbon footprint of the Grange achieved with LED light and secondary double-glazing measures? What percentage reduction is this in the overall energy usage for The Grange?</p>	<p>LED Lighting: The bulbs introduced have an ‘in use’ total wattage reduction of around 75% compared with the bulbs previously in place, primarily as they are more efficient, but also partly as they are brighter and therefore less bulbs are now required to light a room effectively. The absolute reduction in emission terms is unknown, as the lights are not on an independent meter reading.</p> <p>Secondary double-glazing: It is not possible to precisely quantify the emission savings as a result of the new glazing, other than estimations via monitoring emissions arising from use of gas heating. However, even this is prone to a number of variables, including: behavioural change; cold/warm winter weather; and covid legacy (windows were left open during pandemic peak for ventilation reasons). Overall, we expect to see gas usage fall as a consequence of the glazing, but this will take a number of years of monitoring and seasonal weather adjusting to be certain. Anecdotally, however, some staff</p>

	<p>have reported noticeable differences, as well as reporting benefits from reduced external noise interruption.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 36: Will other opportunities be explored for ECDC to operate its own renewable energy infrastructure or is E Space North the only scheme expected to be implemented?</p>	<p>In short, yes, we will. Action 4, for 2022/23 states that, in addition to E Space North, we will “investigate further opportunities for additional PV panel installation on ECDC’s land and buildings, with a particular target being the roof space of The Hive leisure centre”.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 37: How many of the 100 homes identified for LAD1b have had energy efficient improvements completed by 21 March 2022? How many are in progress? How many are not yet started?</p>	<p>As this is a wider consortium project, we do not have the precise figures at this date, though the consortium is working hard to get as many done as possible by the revised deadline of 30 June 2022. It appears highly unlikely the initial target of 100 homes will be met, primarily due to the revised terms set by government during the programme, which, for example, made improving the efficiency of park homes virtually impossible under this grant scheme. Overall, we are expecting 30-45 properties to be retrofitted in East Cambridgeshire under LAD1b by 30 June 2022, with most now underway. Some of the upper end of this revised target may slip into the newer LAD3/HUG schemes instead. Whilst LAD1b has undoubtedly been a frustrating programme for us (as it has been nationally), it did have the benefit, locally, of strengthening our consortium and knowledge of the widescale retrofit challenges we face, which has helped considerably as we move away from LAD1b to other programmes.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 38: What carbon reduction has been achieved in the past year with Action 9?</p>	<p>Action 9 for 2021/22 (energy efficiency of existing housing stock) will not result in any carbon reductions for ECDC as an organisation, but was, instead, aimed at reducing carbon emissions of residents in the district. It is impossible to precisely quantify the emission reductions arising from this programme. However, and whilst this is prone to a huge number of variables, a comprehensive retrofit scheme for a typical residential property would perhaps target a 50% reduction in emissions arising. If the home was built in the last 5-10 years, that % figure would likely be less, whereas an older home that had had no meaningful energy efficient measures installed previously could easily exceed such a 50% reduction. A typical UK household emits around 3.2 tonnes CO₂e on average for the energy it uses in the home (gas, electricity, oil), so a 50% reduction would save 1.6 tonnes CO₂e per property per year.</p>

<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 38: In the first two full months of operation what reduction has been achieved in the number of litres of diesel used compared to the same period last year and what does this represent in tonnes of CO2 saved?</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that in the first few months of operation of the revised waste collection routes, both residents and our operators had to familiarise themselves with the new arrangements, and inevitably this has led to a higher level of 'missed collections' being reported, and vehicles having to respond to such. The full efficiency savings were therefore never anticipated to be achieved in the initial months, and the preliminary fuel use data we have since the revised routes were introduced is showing this to be the case, with similar levels of fuel being used as previous. However, once the routes have settled down, we then expect to see the forecast 1 tonne per month CO2e saving to be achieved.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 39: How are the installation costs for the new EVCPs funded? Is BP Pulse still planned to be the operator? And if yes what actions have been taken to address previous concerns raised regarding the availability (up-time) of the EVCPs and customer service concerns?</p>	<p>The installation costs of the EVCPs are 100% government grant funded, following a successful (albeit lengthy) grant application process. BP Pulse are the planned operator, though prior to contract finalisation we are requiring additional written commitments to ensure we receive not only the EVCPs as expected but also a high quality customer service, together with appropriate 'penalty clauses' should service not be as expected.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 39: What is the power delivery specification (kW) of the EVCPs to be installed?</p>	<p>7kW chargepoint units with Type 2 connection at each location. Typically, this will mean around 8 hours to charge a car from empty to full, though of course less time for just a top up or partial charge.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 39: What arrangements will be put in place to limit the duration of use of the EVCPs to maximise the number of EV users who can benefit from them?</p>	<p>We have not yet finalised the maximum permitted stay in the EVCP bays, though the grant funding stipulates that a 4 hour stay should be allowed, as a minimum. This minimum period could also be set as the maximum, but that has not yet been determined.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 39: What plans does the council have for workplace based</p>	<p>Action 9 for 2022/23 states our intention to: "Prepare a Travel Plan for the Council which aims to reduce car use to and from the Councils offices, both in terms of staff commuting as well as business related travel, and explore opportunities to offer incentives to staff to take up low</p>

<p>EVCPs to encourage employees to switch to EVs?</p>	<p>carbon modes of travel.” As part of that, it is anticipated that measures to encourage electric car take up by staff will be included.</p>
<p>Environment Plan (Year 3), page 39: What is the percentage of the working week and number of staff who are now working from home compared to pre-COVID pandemic? What is the estimate of the overall reduction in commuting achieved to date by actions to embed a culture of home working to reduce commuting?</p>	<p>Whilst we don't readily have precise statistics available, typically staff are now working on average 1-2 days per week from home (apart from those which, due to the nature of their work, they cannot work from home), which is much higher than pre-covid pandemic when only very limited home working was undertaken. Typically, those with longer journeys from home appear more likely to do more working from home, which obviously has a greater emission saving than a saving from a more local journey. Anecdotally, the staff car park is slightly less busy than pre-pandemic, which again signals a reduction in staff commuting to the office. Pulling these together, a very rough estimate is perhaps a 20-30% reduction in total staff commuting emissions, though this is not based on detailed data. Staff travel for business purposes has seen a greater reduction, with virtual meetings continuing as a 'norm' rather than a pandemic 'necessity'. Action 9 for 2022/23 (Travel Plan for the Council) will review available data more thoroughly, and seek to reduce staff travel emissions overall.</p>

Item 9 – Housing Enforcement Policy

<p>How is the authority able to identify private landlords? And what proportion of private landlords does the council believe it has identified?</p>	<p>The Council does not hold data on all private landlords in the District and therefore estimating the proportion known at any point in time, is difficult. The 2021 Housing Stock Modelling Report advises that there are 37,556 dwellings in East Cambridgeshire of which 15% were estimated to be in the private rented sector. This is 5633 dwellings and as it is likely that the majority of private landlords will only own 1 property for rent, rather than a large portfolio, and these landlords may use agents such as Cheffins to manage their properties. There is no requirement for landlords to be registered or licensed by the local authority if they are operating a single family let or a small house in multiple occupation. As a very rough estimate I would suggest we know about <5% of the number of private landlords. Further difficulties with understanding up to date numbers of private landlords arises as properties will move into and out of the rental market. The Housing Advice Team have contact details for the private landlords that they liaise with, and Environmental Health have contact details for landlords of licensed HMO's and</p>
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	<p>those landlords whom we have had to contact in the past, as a result of a complaint being received about housing conditions from a tenant. Whilst there is no requirement for private landlords of all types of rented property to register with the local authority at the present time, the Government will be publishing a White Paper in the spring and it may contain proposals for introducing a National Landlord Register. Details are awaited.</p>
<p>What actions does the council take to ensure tenants are aware of their rights and the duties of their landlords as detailed in the Private Sector Housing Environment Enforcement Policy?</p>	<p>We offer a reactive service to complaints about housing conditions and provide full details of the requirements on landlords to provide safe housing, when tenants come through to us. House inspections are undertaken as required. Whenever Housing Options Officers are dealing with general tenant enquiries they direct them to Env Health if any specific concerns or queries are raised about the condition of the property. The Community Advice Service is another tool by which to reach out to tenants and there is information on all aspects of housing conditions on the website and what tenants should expect when renting a property. The website will need updating following adoption of the new Housing Enforcement Policy, with information on rights and requirements under the new Electrical Safety Regulations and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards etc. Env Health will be producing new leaflets for distribution and for use by the Community Advice Service, at future community events, landlord forums etc.</p>

Item 11 Quarter 4 2021/22 Performance Report for the Waste and Street Cleansing Services

<p>Page 1, para 3.2: How many HGV drivers should ECSS have for refuse collection if there were no vacancies? How many HGV drivers should ECSS have for street cleansing if there were no vacancies? How many HGV driver vacancies are there currently for refuse collection? How many HGV driver vacancies are there currently for street cleansing? When is it expected that those loaders undertaking HGV training will have completed that training and be able to work as drivers? What steps have been taken</p>	<p>When all full time LGV driver positions are filled, the split of resource is as follows: Waste collections: 12 Class C Drivers 2 Class C1 Drivers Street Cleansing: 3 Class C Drivers 1 Class C1 Driver As drivers are able to be deployed across both services, vacancies are totalled across both services. The number of current HGV vacancies is three.</p>
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<p>to discourage a newly qualified HGV driver from leaving ECSS for another HGV role with another employer?</p>	<p>Currently, there are two ECSS employees undertaking training to become an HGV driver. One of them has passed their test (Friday 10 June), with the other currently training for their theory test.</p> <p>Employees who enrol into training through ECSS sign a training agreement, stating they will remain with the organisation for the next two years.</p>
<p>Page 1, para 3.3: What evidence is available to substantiate the statement that residents were able to reduce the amount of green waste they generated? How many additional journeys were made by residents to their local Household Recycling Centre when the green waste collections were suspended?</p>	<p>Comparing the total tonnages of recyclable waste from each month with Q4 evidences a reduction during the suspension and then an influx after its return. This increase is a reduction on the same timeframe from the previous year. The total tonnages for non-recyclable waste also evidences a reduction from the same period last year. These figures indicate that less green waste was produced, supported by there being no increase in non-recyclable waste, show that either less waste was produced or other methods of disposal were utilised, like home composting and using HRCs.</p> <p>ECSS does not hold any information in relation to the number of trips residents took to HRCs during the suspension of the service.</p>
<p>Page 2, para 3.7: When is the new contract for the reprocessing of recyclable material expected to be agreed given the current contract expires in September? What, if any, are the significant changes expected in the new contract?</p>	<p>ECDC had exercised their right to extend the current MRF contact until August 2024.</p>
<p>Page 3, para 4.1: What would the "Collections complete successfully" KPI be if calculated to include green bins collections throughout December 2021 and January 2022? What was the total revenue impact of issuing reductions to residents with brown bins to compensate for suspended collections? Can more details be provided of the 38% of Street Cleansing work that was not completed as scheduled? For</p>	<p>If non-scheduled green waste collections were factored into the successful collection rate during the timeframe of the suspension, the overall collection rate would be 87%.</p> <p>ECSS provided additional green bin users with a £7.50 reduction on their renewal fee due to the suspension of the service. The total amount of discount applied to renewals for 2022/23 was £8,115</p>

<p>example, reduction in frequency of litter and dog bin emptying, street sweeping not performed etc.</p>	<p>Due to staffing absences, the large road sweepers used across the district were not deployed throughout Q4. This is where a majority of the non-completion of street cleansing work lays. In addition, areas such as flytipping and general litter clearance were not able to be completed within the SLA timeframe, further affecting the overall statistic. The majority of litter and dog bins continued to be completed on schedule.</p>
<p>Page 3, para 4.6: The Memorandum of Agreement between ECDC and ECSS had a target for the 2021/22 recycling rate of 59%. Why is the achieved figure for 2021/22 only 56.6% and what actions are being taken to bring rates up to those targets agreed with the MOA was signed?</p>	<p>The district recycling rate fluctuates substantially through the year and during particular quarters, the 59% target has been achieved. However, due to the natural fluctuations in tonnage produced by residents, sustaining this high-level target for the entirety of the year is difficult. ECSS's development team use educational and promotional methods to sustain this high recycling rate and well as assist in increasing it. Maintaining the same rate for two consecutive years is very positive and highlights that the method used locally, as well as nationally remain effective. The Development team will continue to utilise a variety of method to sustain and increase this rate in future years.</p>
<p>Page 4, para 4.9: How many staff should be in the development team? How many staff were in place at the start of the quarter? How many staff were in place at the end of the quarter?</p>	<p>ECSS's development team consists of two employees, a Development Manager and Development Officer.</p> <p>At the start of Q4 only the Development Officer was in post. At the end of the Q4, both positions were filled, with the Development Manager operating part time.</p>