



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of  
East Cambridgeshire District Council held at  
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE on  
Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022 at 6.00pm

**PRESENT**

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith	Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor David Ambrose Smith	Councillor Alec Jones
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Daniel Schumann
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor David Brown	Councillor Alan Sharp (Chairman)
Councillor Charlotte Cane	Councillor Lisa Stubbs
Councillor Matthew Downey	Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Paola Trimarco
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Jo Webber
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Mark Goldsack	Councillor Gareth Wilson
Councillor Bill Hunt	

2 members of the public were in attendance.

**62. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sue Austen, Simon Harries, Julia Huffer, Amy Starkey and Alison Whelan.

**64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of Interest was made as follows:

- Cllr Gareth Wilson for Agenda Item 9: Loan to East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) – interest as a member of East Cambs CLT.
- Cllr Anna Bailey for Agenda Item 9: Loan to East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) – interest as a trustee of East Cambs CLT.
- Cllr Lisa Stubbs for Agenda Item 9: Loan to East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) – interest as a trustee of East Cambs CLT.

**65. MINUTES – 22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

Council received the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**66. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed all Members, Officers, and members of the public to the first Council meeting to be held in the Council Chamber since before the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. He stated that, as the meeting was also being livestreamed *via* YouTube, the welcome was extended to members of the public and press who were watching online. Members were reminded of the importance of using their microphones, and that they should stand to speak where possible.

**67. PETITIONS**

No petitions had been received.

**68. MOTIONS**

**a) Congestion Charging**

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Bailey:

That this Council opposes congestion charging in Greater Cambridge.

Speaking as proposer of the Motion, Cllr Hunt emphasised the simplicity of the proposal which opposed the idea of congestion charging in and around Cambridge. Housing in Cambridge was known to be prohibitively expensive for many, and therefore many essential workers lived in East Cambs and other neighbouring districts. Public transport was inadequate, especially for those working shift patterns, and therefore most commuters had to travel by car, particularly if they lived in smaller villages with limited or no public transport. He was also concerned about the effect on those wishing to shop in Cambridge and those accessing the healthcare facilities, including Addenbrooke's Hospital. A Conservative Motion at the County Council opposing congestion charging had been voted down by the Liberal Democrats, Labour, and Independents, therefore his assumption was that congestion charging would be introduced. In addition, he understood that there was a suggestion for organisations to charge £1.50 per car per day for workplace parking, which he also disagreed with. He had been unaware of any consultation having taken place in East Cambs, Fenland or Huntingdonshire, despite all three districts being very affected. The Mayor had cancelled plans for a Metro which would have provided an excellent alternative to using cars in and around Cambridge. A congestion charge of £5/day would be a considerable proportion of many people's take-home salary. He stated that an open consultation should take place for the whole of Cambridgeshire.

Speaking as seconder of the Motion, Cllr Bailey stated that together with other Conservative Leaders across the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) she had written to the County Council requesting that any proposal for congestion charging in Cambridge should be abandoned. Her understanding was that the potential daily charge could be between £4 and £15. She also understood that residents within the GCP area may be entitled to a reduction or exemption from the charge. However, East Cambs was a rural area with limited or no access to public transport, but many residents travelled into Cambridge regularly for work or leisure and would therefore be impacted by the charge. ECDC had championed the re-opening of Soham station, had opened low cost commuter car parks in Littleport and Ely, had completed a Bus Services Review and submitted their proposals to the Combined Authority, had submitted a proposal to the Mayor for an Ely Zipper 2 service, and were currently working on a cycling and walking strategy. The previously-proposed Cambridge Metro service had been cancelled by the Mayor despite the fact that it would have provided an alternative to travelling by car. The Mayor and the GCP had failed to show that they could provide good public transport alternatives to the car, and congestion charging would penalise the rural East Cambs residents for the benefit of the residents of Cambridge City and South Cambs. She urged Members to be united in their opposition of any congestion charging in Cambridge.

During debate on the Motion, there was general acceptance of the severe congestion in and around Cambridge which negatively impacted travel times, including for buses, but widely differing views were expressed on how the problem should be addressed.

A Member stated that the GCP had been consulting on the topic for several years, including *via* a citizens jury exercise which had included East Cambs. Since a consultation was ongoing, the proposal to rule out one potential solution without proposing any other solutions was inappropriate mid-consultation and, on that basis, the proposer was invited to withdraw the Motion. He declined. The Member then highlighted the lack of transport options available to those without cars, as well as the lack of funding that had been in place for the proposed Metro, for which Waterbeach had been the nearest stop to East Cambs. It would be inappropriate to charge shift workers at times when public transport was unavailable, and there would be difficult cases such as disabled drivers and market traders, but it was important not to rule out any options while the consultation process was ongoing. Instead, the Council should engage with the GCP about what was needed in terms of reliable, affordable and sustainable routes from East Cambs into Cambridge. Other Members stressed the importance of major and concerted travel plans all around Cambridge, including East Cambs, and focussing on improved train and bus services throughout the region. They criticised the Motion for failing to propose any solutions to the congestion, or request specific actions such as a referendum.

One Member suggested that Ely should be exploiting the opportunity created by Cambridge's congestion, to promote the shopping and office facilities in Ely. Several Members were critical of the timetable from Soham train station since trains only ran every 2h and there was no direct route to Cambridge. Other

Members explained that the long-term plan had always been to deliver the station, then improve the train frequency and introduce the direct route, both of which were reliant on other factors – the upgrade to the Ely North junction and the reinstatement of the Snailwell loop respectively.

Countering a point raised earlier in the debate, a Member stated that the Metro had been intended to service Fordham and Burwell, both of which were more convenient than Waterbeach for much of East Cambs. They questioned whether the impact of a congestion charge had been considered for volunteer services, for example those that transported people to hospitals, and reiterated that more consultation was needed. Other Members stressed the inequality and social exclusion that would be exacerbated by the implementation of a congestion charge since it would make it harder for many people to afford to travel into Cambridge, particularly those on a low income. Although it had been suggested that the revenue from the congestion charging could be used to reduce fares and otherwise improve public transport, the view that the scheme would charge wealthier people and redistribute the funds to help the less well-off was overly simplistic; many car owners were not affluent but were reliant on their vehicles for many reasons including disabilities, age, security fears and lack of public transport options. Shops in Cambridge could also suffer since people would struggle to pay for the congestion charge as well as the town centre parking. Consultation was needed and should include these issues and the specific impact on East Cambs, and a transport plan should detail all of the affected areas outside Cambridge. Both the Combined Authority and the GCP should be proposing serious solutions for the congestion that did not include congestion charging.

In conclusion, Cllr Hunt stated that voting against the proposal would imply support for charging East Cambs residents to drive into Cambridge. Residents of South Cambs and Cambridge City were more likely to support congestion charging since they could more easily walk and cycle to their destination, whereas the majority of East Cambs was too far away for that to be a realistic option. If East Cambs, Fenland and Huntingdonshire were to be penalised by the introduction of congestion charging then he considered that they deserved to have a referendum on the matter.

Following a request from the proposer, a recorded vote was taken on the Motion:

FOR: (14) – Cllrs C Ambrose Smith, D Ambrose Smith, Bailey, Bovingdon, Brown, Edwards, Every, Goldsack, Hunt, D Schumann, J Schumann, Sharp, Stubbs, Webber

AGAINST: (9) – Cllrs Cane, Downey, Dupré, Inskip, Jones, Trapp, Trimarco, C Whelan, Wilson

ABSTENTIONS: (0)

The Motion was declared to be carried.

**b) Accessible Toilets**

The following Motion was proposed by Cllr Lorna Dupré and seconded by Cllr Matt Downey:

This Council notes that:

- Not every Council owned or managed public toilet in East Cambridgeshire is accessible for people with disabilities.
- The Government has decided that large accessible toilets for severely disabled people—known as Changing Places toilets—will be made compulsory for large new buildings, such as shopping centres, supermarkets, sports and arts venues. The Changing Places interactive map at <https://www.changing-places.org/find> indicates that there is not a single Changing Places toilet in the whole of East Cambridgeshire, and that the nearest Changing Places toilets for residents of the district are at Eddington, Bar Hill, and Mildenhall. Furthermore, East Cambridgeshire is the only district in Cambridgeshire for which no Changing Places grant funding was awarded by Government in March this year.
- The charity Crohn's and Colitis UK is encouraging venues providing accessible toilets to install new signage—two standing figures and a wheelchair user with the words Accessible Toilet and the logo 'Not every disability is visible'. This is to help stop stigma and discrimination towards people with Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis and other invisible conditions. There have been instances nationally where such individuals using an accessible toilet have been accused by staff members of being ineligible to use them.

This Council believes that:

- Provision of good quality, accessible, well-signed public toilets is important not only as a human right, but also for its potential to attract tourists to East Cambridgeshire and enable East Cambridgeshire residents to enjoy the amenities of the district.
- Every public toilet should be accessible for people with disabilities.
- Severely disabled people and their families or carers should be able to spend time in public places confident that a Changing Places toilet is available within a reasonable enough distance not to curtail their visit.
- People with invisible disabilities should be able to use accessible toilets without fear of stigma or discrimination.

This Council resolves to:

- Review disability access to every public toilet provision in East Cambridgeshire, and where this is not in place draw up a plan for installation of disability access arrangements, or make arrangements to replace the toilet with one which can be adapted and which is within a reasonable distance from the inaccessible toilet.
- Engage with businesses and partner organisations across East Cambridgeshire to identify premises, regardless of ownership, where

a Changing Places toilet could be installed; work with them to access Government grant or other funding; and ensure that any Changing Places toilets so installed are properly signposted for visitors.

- Ensure that existing public toilets are signed in line with Crohn's & Colitis UK guidance; ask town and district centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible toilets; and seek advice from Crohn's & Colitis UK on the information and training this Council should provide to council staff members to enable them to understand these conditions and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who suffer with them.

Speaking as proposer of the Motion, Cllr Dupré explained that she had been contacted by local residents because East Cambs had been identified as the only district in Cambridgeshire not to receive, or ask for, Changing Places grant funding from the Government. Changing Places toilets were large facilities with a range of equipment such as hoists for severely disabled people. Although there was one Changing Places toilet at The Hive leisure centre, it was not mentioned on the Council's toilets website and a national map of such facilities indicated that there were none in East Cambs. It would also not be conveniently located for visitors to the city centre. Government funding was not restricted to toilets owned by the Council, so it would have been possible to work with partner organisations such as The Maltings, the library, supermarkets, or religious buildings in order to prepare joint bids, which would make East Cambs more attractive to disabled visitors. The Motion asked for a review and for the subsequent development of a plan. No timescales had been proposed in recognition that it would not be a cheap or easy project, but the Council should be ambitious. The Motion also referenced signage of public toilets, and the seconder was invited to speak on that aspect of their Motion.

Speaking as the seconder of the Motion, Cllr Downey shared some of his personal experiences of living with Crohn's Disease. He stated that a survey had shown that 61% of people with Crohn's or ulcerative colitis had suffered from verbal or physical abuse related to their condition, and that a survey in 2000 had indicated that 93% of respondents believed that challenging a healthy-looking person who was accessing a disabled facility would be the correct thing to do. However, many people suffered from invisible illnesses and those with bowel or bladder issues needed to constantly plan around toilet access and often ended up feeling afraid to leave their home. There was widespread misunderstanding that accessible toilets were purely intended for those in wheelchairs. The Motion provided an opportunity to address this in a simple way by revising signage throughout the District. The Motion called for simple actions without a strict timetable and should therefore be approved without delay or referral elsewhere.

The Chairman stated that, since the matter fell within the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Assets Committee, the Motion would stand referred to that Committee in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4.

## 69. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Questions were received and responses given as follows:

### **i) Question to the Leader of Council from Cllr Lorna Dupré:**

“At the last meeting of the Full Council, the Leader claimed that the reason for her decision to delete from a motion by Cllr Inskip his expression of disappointment at the breach of lockdown rules by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, was that her administration was 'focussed on delivering for local residents'. Given that in the weeks since that claim, her Council has not even been able to collect the bins competently, does she believe that her claim is credible?”

### **Response from the Leader of Council, Cllr Anna Bailey:**

“What a torturous, circuitous effort by Cllr Dupré to find a route to mention the Prime Minister! Cllr Dupré might like to pose her question to herself Chairman – whilst I’m certainly focussed on local issues it appears Cllr Dupré is not!

Cllr Dupré refers to “her Council”. I thought, Chairman, that this was our Council, that all Members form part of this authority and that collectively we have a responsibility to support the smooth running of the Council and delivery of its services for the good of our residents. The fact that Cllr Dupré feels so far removed from that says rather more about her than it does about the rest of us.”

*Cllr Dupré raised a Point of Explanation, that the phrasing “her Council” had been used since the Leader of Council had on previous occasions stated that the privilege of the Administration was to be able to make the decisions.*

“The simple answer to Cllr Dupré’s question is yes! Myself and my colleagues in the administration are totally focussed on delivering for local residents in East Cambs. I work alongside officers every single day in pursuit of that cause.

In April 2018 we brought the waste service back in-house into East Cambs Street Scene and since then we’ve all enjoyed one of the very best waste services in the country – and thanks for that go directly to the Street Scene staff and crew. And thanks to our residents we have one of the best recycling rates in the country.

Our waste crews collect the recycling, green waste and residual waste from nearly 40,000 households across our rural district. They collect all public and dog bin waste, they clean our streets, collect bulky waste items, remove fly-tipping, and scrub graffiti, they keep our district clean and tidy. They do a difficult job, they do a fantastic job, and I am proud of them and I thank them.

East Cambs has experienced huge growth over the last few years – more households, more waste and recycling. The collection rounds hadn't been reconfigured for years. Continuing with the existing rounds was not an option – on some days the rounds were too full with too many households. If you consider for a moment, just the infill development in your own village or town, it is easy to see how rounds get out of kilter.

I want to apologise to residents that have had interruptions to their service and who've had to report missed bins, the vast majority of whom have been incredibly understanding and patient.

It is worth noting that South Cambs and Cambridge City's shared waste service has, like most waste collection authorities across the country, been suffering issues of its own, arising from the national HGV driver shortages – their response, Chairman, was to stop residents from being able to even report a missed bin and to simply make people wait until their next collection day. I am pleased to say that we have not had to resort to that.

Our waste crews have largely been working the same rounds for many years. The reconfiguration has changed those rounds – crews, who want to remain working in their close-knit teams, are working in unfamiliar territory. Unfortunately, it isn't possible to trial run new rounds – you simply have to stop the old rounds one day and start the new rounds the next. It is inevitable that there will be teething issues and we may still need to make further minor changes to some of the rounds to get them to the optimal point. But we will get there – the crews are the same people that were running the excellent service previously and we will get back to that excellent service again, I am absolutely confident of that.

Cllr Dupré may like to note that the round reconfiguration is expected to save nearly 5,000 litres of fuel and deliver a reduction of 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions every year – it's the equivalent to taking one truck off the road every day. Change isn't always perfect from day one, but that doesn't mean it isn't right to do it. Our crews will get used to the new rounds and we will get back to the really excellent service we have all been used to.”

**ii) Question to the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee from Cllr John Trapp:**

“The ECTC board requested a new loan facility at its board meeting on 7 March 2022. When were you first aware of this loan request, and why was this request not on the agenda of the F&A committee on 24 March 2022 for detailed scrutiny?”



**Response from the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee, Cllr David Brown:**

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Trapp.

I was first aware of the request on 7<sup>th</sup> March when I attended the ECTC Board meeting as an observer. It was not on the agenda on 24<sup>th</sup> March because it is a matter for Full Council.”

**iii) Question to the Chairman of the Operational Services Committee from Cllr Charlotte Cane:**

“Schedule 4 Section 3 of the Memorandum of Understanding with ECSS states that operational changes to the refuse service can only be made with the endorsement of the Chair of the Regulatory Services Committee (or equivalent), i.e. the Chair of the Operational Services Committee.

The regular Green Waste collection is fortnightly, but collections were suspended by ECSS between Monday 13 December 2021 to Friday 28 January 2022 inclusive.

Can the Chair of the Operational Services Committee confirm whether she endorsed this suspension of Green Waste collections between Monday 13 December 2021 and Friday 28 January 2022?”

**Response from the Chairman of the Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer:**

*(Read aloud by the Democratic Services Manager.)*

“Unfortunately, I am not able to attend Full Council on Thursday and I thank you for your question. However, I would refer you to my email of 6th January sent at 1.26pm which fully answers your question.”

Following a Point of Order raised by a Member, the Chairman directed the Democratic Services Manager to request the referenced email from the Chairman of the Operational Services Manager, and to then circulate it to all Members.

**iv) Question to Cllr Lisa Stubbs from Cllr Matthew Downey:**

“a) You have liked a tweet stating that “white privilege is a myth”  
Do you agree with this and, if not, will you apologise for liking this tweet?

b) You have liked a tweet referring to gay journalist Owen Jones as a “rant boy”  
do you believe that term is an appropriate way to describe someone or will you apologise for liking it?”

**Response from Cllr Lisa Stubbs:**

“I am aware that I have the option to decline to answer under the Council’s Constitution Part 4, Rules of Procedure, Rule 13.2. However, I would like to say a few words in response.

As Elected Members we all sign up to The Members Code of Conduct. It is intended to promote high standards of behaviour amongst the

elected members of the council. Should anyone wish to complain about the conduct of a Member, all Members are aware of the correct process and that is the complaint must be submitted to the Monitoring Office for consideration. Not use the "Answer Questions from Members" item on the agenda as an opportunity to repeat previously unfounded accusations, attack and label a person.

Cllr Downey is familiar with the Complaint process as he himself was recently sanctioned for two breaches of the Member Code of Conduct, failing to treat others with respect and that when doing so, his conduct brought his office into disrepute. To my knowledge he has yet to comply with the sanctions.

As a woman, as a person of Irish descent, and as a daughter of Irish immigrants, I have been judged, excluded and marginalised on the basis of my gender and heritage.

I did not find my gender or heritage a disadvantage. The adversity shaped me, made me resilient, helped me to find the most powerful weapon against bigotry, misogyny, sexism, and racism...my voice. With my voice I have the power to agree or disagree, to challenge and to make a difference for the residents I represent. As a District Councillor that is what I have done and what I will continue to focus on.

These questions are aimed at attacking my character and ignoring my life experience in order to categorise and label me."

#### **70. LOAN TO EAST CAMBS TRADING COMPANY**

Council considered a report (W175, previously circulated) recommending that a new loan facility of £7.5m be approved for the East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC), and that the former Paradise Pool site be sold to the company for £539,650.

The Chairman reminded Members that there were a number of Exempt appendices relating to this agenda item, and a number of Member questions and associated responses regarding the appendices had been tabled at the meeting. He advised that, if any Members wished to raise further questions on the Exempt information, or discuss the contents of the appendices, then it would be necessary to exclude the press and public from that section of the meeting. At this point, two Members indicated that this would be required.

Cllr Bailey moved the recommendation in the report, seconded by Cllr J Schumann who reserved the right to speak. Cllr Bailey stated that it had always been a priority of the current Administration that the Council should work commercially for community benefit. As such, ECTC had been a success story with beautiful new homes having been transferred to community land trusts (CLTs), planning permission having been obtained for Kennett Garden Village, a new car park having been built, an agreement reached to help facilitate the

construction of the new hospital, and the Ely markets being well-run. There had also been a reduction of £100k in costs to the Council for maintaining the parks and open spaces, and the overall benefit to the Council had been £3.64m to date. ECTC was now looking ahead and had identified three projects to progress, for which they had requested a new loan from the Council. The loan would have a commercial rate of interest and the Council would have security *via* a debenture. With the loan in place, ECTC would deliver further £100k Homes, which had been supported by the Council as a way to support local people. Approval of the proposal would also support the medium-term finances of the Council in order to continue to provide efficient services, low Council Tax, and delivery of new homes.

A Member raised a Point of Order to question what kind of interest Cllr Bailey had declared regarding the item. Cllr Bailey stated that she had declared a personal interest.

The Finance Manager and S151 Officer then introduced the report and explained that the recommendation was to approve the loan, which would replace the two current loans, that would be up to a maximum of £7.5m and would be charged 4.50% interest with full repayment due by March 2026. He confirmed that he had reviewed the accounts and future plans of ECTC and was satisfied that the Company would be able to repay the loan.

A Member informed the Chairman that, during her proposal speech, Cllr Bailey had mentioned a figure that was in the Exempt appendix. The Member questioned whether the statement needed to be withdrawn and, if not, which other parts of the Exempt papers could be discussed in public.

*The meeting was adjourned 7:28–7:34pm.*

The Chairman explained that the figure referred to by Cllr Bailey had been in the budget papers and was therefore already in the public domain. Cllr Bailey added that it was also on page 16 of Agenda Item 4, the Minutes of the previous meeting. Two Members further questioned why publicly-available information was in the Exempt paperwork. As the agenda item concerned £7.5m of public money, the debate should be held in public as far as was possible. However, most of the supporting information had been provided as Exempt paperwork, all of which contained a header specifically stating that it could not be disclosed; if some of the information was publicly-available then that should be made clear in order to facilitate open debate.

The Chief Executive explained that the Exempt paperwork contained the report presented to the ECTC Board Meeting, it was then for the report author to include in their public report what they considered to be the most pertinent issues that could be disclosed in the public domain.

The Chairman then invited questions for the Officer and reiterated that all questions relating to material presented in the Exempt paperwork would need to be asked in the Exempt Session.

Referring to the proposer's statement that £3.6m additional income had accrued to the Council as a result of ECTC's activities, a Member asked how much of that income would have been received if other developers had delivered the schemes. The Finance Manager stated that he did not have that figure available. The ECTC Property Director explained that more information could be provided in Exempt Session, but S106 payments, CIL payments, and land charges could all have been achieved from other developers.

It was then proposed by Cllr Dupré, seconded by Cllr C Whelan, and unanimously approved, that:

The press and public be excluded because it was 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 there would be disclosure to them of Exempt information under Categories 1, 2 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

*The meeting was held in Exempt Session 7:44–8:04pm*

On re-admittance, the Chairman welcomed back the public and press and reminded Members that the meeting would need to return to Exempt Session if any parts of the debate included Exempt information.

A Member stated their opposition to both the proposed £7.5m loan and the sale of the former Paradise Pool site to ECTC, they also requested that separate votes be held on the two recommendations. The loan was intended to repay the Company's existing loans from the Council, to undertake new work, and potentially also to repay the Company's outstanding loan from the Combined Authority. The Combined Authority had previously stated on record that they were not confident of the Company's ability to repay that loan. However, Members had not been presented with a risk analysis or details of mitigations on which they could base their decision about whether to approve the loan. Although there was more information within the Exempt papers, it was insufficient and was presented from the Company's perspective rather than the Council's. In addition, the Council had previously decided to sell the former Paradise Pool site to a commercial developer, rather than ECTC, whilst still including the £100k homes; no evidence had been provided to give confidence that ECTC would be able to deliver the scheme when a commercial developer had not found it to be viable.

Several other Members also expressed concerns about the proposals. One Member stressed the importance of detailed risk assessments, including the impact that the rise in the cost of living would have on house sales. They stated that since no such information had been provided, an informed judgement could not be made. Other Members commented on the affordable housing element, expressing concern that the previously-approved developer for the former Paradise Pool site had pulled-out, and also that more affordable housing should be built by ECTC on Council-owned land.

Speaking as the seconder of the Motion, Cllr J Schumann reminded Members that the loan proposal was for a maximum of £7.5m and stated that it was standard practice for companies to refinance their loans from borrowing. Since the S151 Officer had scrutinised the Company's Business Plan and been satisfied, he was delighted to support both the loan with a 4.5% return and the delivery of the former Paradise Pool site, both of which were indicative of the Council being commercial for community benefit.

The proposer concluded the debate by reminding Members of the debenture that, due to the successes that the Company had already had, would provide greater security for the Council than had been possible with the previous loans. The £100k homes were a novel product that provided a discounted purchase price in perpetuity and it was important that the Council maintained the agreed intention for the former Paradise Pool site. The S151 Officer had studied the proposals and recommended that they be approved, and they were commercial for community benefit which had been a promise in the Conservative Group's May 2019 election literature.

In response to a request from the Chairman, the Chief Executive explained that Officers had considered the recommendations to be intrinsically linked and, as such, had presented them for a single vote. The sale figure for the former Paradise Pool site reflected the information provided in the papers. It was for the Chairman to decide whether or not, in the interests of the effective transaction of business at the meeting, to vote separately on the loan and the sale. The Chairman informed Members that there would be a single vote on the complete recommendations.

It was resolved:

- i) That a new loan facility for East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) from 1 May 2022 be approved under the following terms, specifically:
  - Loan facility of £7,500,000 (seven million five hundred thousand pounds);
  - Four year loan facility with the final repayment no later than 31 March 2026;
  - Interest rate of 4.50% per annum;
  - Loan facility to be secured by a debenture that will give the Council first ranking security for the debt over all unsecured assets of the Company. Prior to 31 March 2023 this will be ranked behind the CPCA security, but once that is repaid ECTC will have top security on all of the Company's assets.
  
- ii) That the sale of the former Paradise Pool site to ECTC for the sum of £539,650 be approved.
  
- iii) That the Finance Manager and Legal Services Manager be authorised to complete the necessary documentation to implement (i) and (ii) above.

*The meeting was briefly adjourned 8:26–8:34pm for a comfort break.*

**71. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD DIRECTOR (EAST CAMBS TRADING COMPANY)**

Council considered a report (W176, previously circulated) recommending that the Corporate Unit Manager, Sally Bonnett, be appointed as a Board Director of the East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC).

Cllr D Ambrose Smith moved the recommendation in the report, seconded by Cllr Bovingdon. As the proposer, Cllr D Ambrose Smith highlighted the Corporate Unit Manager's wide-ranging skills and experience which made her highly suitable for the post. As the seconder, Cllr Bovingdon offered his support for the appointment having worked with the candidate for several years, most recently with the Combined Authority.

A Member stated their opposition to the appointment but stressed that it was unrelated to the candidate, who was a well-liked individual. The opposition was regarding the principle of senior Council Officers being Directors of the Trading Companies, thereby blurring the boundaries between the Council and its Trading Companies, and introducing daily conflicts of interest in their roles.

Two Members stated their support for the proposed appointment, emphasising the candidate's hard work and efficiency. One of the Members also stated that the Council had previously sought legal advice regarding the appointment of Trading Company directors, and that all Councillors and Senior Officers were familiar with correctly exercising multiple roles.

In conclusion, Cllr D Ambrose Smith reiterated the suitability of the Corporate Unit Manager for the role of Board Director (ECTC).

It was resolved:

That Sally Bonnett, Corporate Unit Manager, be appointed as Board Director for ECTC.

**72. EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN (SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW) – PROPOSED SUBMISSION VERSION**

Council considered a report (W177, previously circulated) regarding the very limited update of the East Cambs Local Plan 2015.

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and reminded Members that a very limited Local Plan update had been agreed in October 2020 in order to bring the housing target up to date. Two rounds of consultation had been completed and Members were now requested to authorise the final round of consultation and the required independent examination. An updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) had also been provided, which accelerated the

process when compared to the previously-agreed scheme; Members were asked to approve the updated LDS.

Cllr Bailey moved the recommendation in the report, seconded by Cllr Goldsack who reserved his right to speak. Cllr Bailey stated that good progress was being made on the limited update which was simply a revision to policy GROWTH1 to refresh the housing target in line with the housing need figure. Substantial revisions of all Local Plans would be needed once the anticipated significant changes in Government planning policy were announced.

A Member spoke in support of the Motion but cautioned that the Local Plan was now 7 years old, following the abandoned update in 2019. The recent successful appeal in Soham gave an unequivocal opinion that the current allocations were not meeting the housing need. Two years previously, the Government had committed to changing the planning system but no progress had been made, this in turn prevented the Council from meaningfully updating the Local Plan but the proposals in the report were needed and supported.

Speaking as the seconder, Cllr Goldsack welcomed the support for the Motion and explained that, as the Ward Member for the Soham appeal site, he had met with Officers to understand the issues that had led to the successful appeal. Consequently, it was clear to him that the very limited update to the Local Plan was essential. He also highlighted the forthcoming vote regarding the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan, and that development of the Soham Neighbourhood Plan was well underway.

Cllr Bailey, as proposer, also welcomed the support for the Motion and summarised the reasons for the withdrawal of the emerging Local Plan in 2019.

It was unanimously resolved:

- i) That the final round of consultation (known officially as a Regulation 19 proposed submission publication draft plan) be authorised to take place on the very limited partial update of the 2015 Local Plan, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, for six weeks (likely during May-June 2022); AND its subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for the purpose of independent examination also be authorised.
- ii) That the updated Local Development Scheme, set out at Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
- iii) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Planning Manager to agree and consult upon a set of proposed modifications during the examination process (most likely at the very end of the examination process), if asked by the Inspector to do so.

**73. CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORTS – January to March 2022**

Council considered the reports (previously circulated) from the Combined Authority's Audit & Governance Committee (28/1/22), Overview & Scrutiny Committee (24/1/22) and Combined Authority Board (26/1/22).

There were no comments or questions.

It was unanimously resolved:

That the reports from the Constituent Council representatives on the Combined Authority be noted.

**74. ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY – ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANTS**

The Council considered report W178, previously circulated, detailing the actions taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency with regard to the Additional Restrictions Grant Round 9.

There were no comments or questions.

It was unanimously resolved:

That the actions taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency relating to Additional Restrictions Grant – Round 9, as detailed in the report, be noted.

**75. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

The Chairman thanked all members of the public and press present in the Council Chamber, or watching the livestream online.

It was then proposed by Cllr Bailey, seconded by Cllr J Schumann, and unanimously approved, that:

The press and public be excluded because it was 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 there would be disclosure to them of Exempt information under Categories 1, 2 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

*The public section of the meeting concluded at 8:52pm and the meeting moved to Exempt Session.*



**76. ARP – S113 FRAUD SERVICES AGREEMENT**

Council considered a report (W179, previously circulated) from Anglia Revenues Partnership regarding the S113 Fraud Services Agreement.

It was unanimously resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be actioned.

The meeting concluded at 8:55pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....