



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council
held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE
on Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 6.00pm

Present

Councillor Chika Akinwale
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Anna Bailey
Councillor Ian Bovingdon
Councillor David Brown (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Charlotte Cane
Councillor Christine Colbert
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Mark Goldsack (Chair)
Councillor Martin Goodearl
Councillor Kathrin Holtzmann
Councillor Keith Horgan
Councillor Julia Huffer

Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor David Miller
Councillor Kelli Pettitt
Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Caroline Shepherd
Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Ross Trent
Councillor Lucius Vellacott
Councillor Mary Wade
Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Gareth Wilson

51. Public Question Time

Question from Ted Coney, Babylon Arts Trustee

"As you are going to be asked to vote on an amendment to the budget by the Lib/Dem and Independent group on money for Arts and Tourism, I understand this is in particular reference to Babylon Arts of which I am a trustee. Have your leaders sent you a link to our Business Plan? I think it is very important that you know what a great loss Babylon Gallery will be to the city and wider area if it is forced to close because of lack of funding.

"I was present as a trustee some 12 years ago when the councillors took our core funding away and have seen at first hand how difficult it has been to rely on just grants for particular projects and donations to keep going.

"I very much hope that this time you can work together to restore some core funding so that we can carry on our vital work."

Question from Peter Harvey (read out by the Chair)

"Given the council is committed to retaining community facilities, including cultural facilities:

- What is the council doing to support or facilitate Babylon ARTS in its quest for revenue funding to enable it to survive, given its loss could have an adverse effect on the local community?
- Who is the ECDC lead member and/or officer, for arts development?
- What is ECDC policy on arts development in the district?"

Response from the Leader, Cllr Bailey to both questions:

"Thank you both for your questions. As a past Trustee of Babylon Arts, I recognise the hugely valued role that it plays in the community and I thank the volunteers for all their work over the years. In particular, the Babylon Gallery is an important part of Ely's vibrant culture and definitely adds to the city's tourism industry. I know that you get significant numbers through the gallery every year and importantly it also gives Babylon Arts a place from which to operate. I have met with representatives from Babylon Arts and recognise its reliance on individual grant funding, which is always going to be a 'hand to mouth' form of operating. I support moves to ensure that it establishes a more sustainable operating model, which seeks to reduce its reliance on grant funding in the future. To specifically answer your question, as to whether the business plan has been circulated to councillors, this was not an item on our agenda this evening and so I do not believe it has been circulated, but it certainly can be.

"I just want to quickly provide a bit of history. Back in 2013, the City of Ely Council took over responsibility for supporting Babylon Arts from the District Council, as part of a wider programme involving the transfer of assets and responsibilities. The Maltings building was also transferred. In 2017, the City of Ely Council also took over responsibility for tourism specific to Ely. I congratulate them for the great job that they have done, we have a really vibrant scene in Ely. Until recently, the City of Ely had provided support to Babylon through the free use of the Maltings to run its cinema. I understand the Babylon have stopped running the cinema and the City of Ely Council are now in the process of trying to establish a community cinema. We wish them luck with that. The District Council's role in supporting the arts is to provide capital grants to support community facilities across the district and notably this has recently included the Viva community theatre in Soham, which is thriving. Additionally, other investments in community facilities and buildings have been made all over the district.

"I met with the City of Ely Council last week, to discuss a request from them about assets in Ely that were still in the freehold ownership of the District Council and the funding of Babylon Arts was also discussed. It was clear that neither council wanted to see the loss of the Babylon Gallery, why adds so much to making Ely such a lovely place. We do need a little more time and a little more information before we can progress these discussions. Any proposals will be subject to detailed consideration and approval of our respective committees. I have been keeping the Chair of Babylon updated on these developments, so that she can do what she needs to do to progress matters. I understand that last night the City of Ely Council agreed to refer a decision back to its committee to reconsider the situation. This will provide more time for both councils to liaise with Babylon Arts to better understand the financial position and ensure that a more informed decision is made. I hope that it is a positive decision."

Supplementary Question from Ted Coney, Babylon Arts Trustee

“As a Trustee I was not aware that the City of Ely Council had given anything to Babylon, although we are grateful to them for not charging us for using the Maltings for the cinema, but this was not a favour for Babylon, it was a favour to the people of Ely, so that they could enjoy that facility.

“I do not believe that the City of Ely councillors have seen the Babylon business plan and so this had now been provided to the clerk. I ask that the business plan is circulated to all district councillors, as we are fighting for something that is really vital and unless everyone is informed, I do not think that we stand a fair chance.”

Response from the Leader, Cllr Bailey:

“I will ensure that the business plan is circulated to all district councillors, but I cannot speak for the City of Ely.”

52. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr James Lay.

53. Declarations of Interest

The Democratic Services and Elections Manager explained that regarding agenda item 13, Council Tax, councillors were advised that whilst being a council taxpayer was a pecuniary interest, it was not a disclosable pecuniary interest, and they did not need to apply for a dispensation to participate in the debate or vote.

Cllr Gareth Wilson declared a personal interest in agenda item 12, East Cambridgeshire Trading Company – loan deadline extension request.

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, Council Tax Revenue and Capital Budgets, as a tenant of the Council.

54. Minutes – 17 October 2024 & 11 December 2024

It was agreed unanimously:

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the words “County Council” to “County Councillor” in the third paragraph on page 5.

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 December 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

55. Chair’s Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- In the absence of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, the Director Operations was the lead officer for the meeting.
- The Council had been awarded DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation.

- On behalf of the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Chair asked all councillors to ensure that their declaration of interest forms were up to date and to complete their related parties' declarations, as our external auditors had highlighted issues in these areas.
- Agenda item 16 and the paragraph regarding the private session were removed from the agenda as they were deemed superfluous.

56. Petitions

No petitions had been received.

57. Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10

No Motions had been received.

58. Notice of Recission Motion under Procedure Rule 20

The Chair reported that the motion to rescind the Motion agreed by Council on 17 October 2024 to commence a new Local Plan had the required support of a proposer, seconder and three additional councillors.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that after the Council unanimously decided to initiate a new Local Plan in October, the Government revealed intentions to eliminate the authority and shift spatial planning duties to the Mayor. The Leader determined that investing hundreds of thousands in a possibly redundant Local Plan would be imprudent.

Cllr Lorna Dupré concurred that the Council should rescind its decision from October due to the proposed local government reorganisation and new mayoral powers. She also pointed out that the current plan will be 10 years old in April because of earlier delays in developing a new Local Plan. In response, Cllr Anna Bailey clarified that the previous local plan had been withdrawn after the planning inspector removed key elements, including the community-led development policy and the requirement for disability access. The inspector also imposed housing numbers without supporting evidence, leading to the withdrawal of this draft local plan. The Council had been waiting for government guidance before proceeding, which contributed to the delay.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott endorsed the recommendation, noting that, in light of the proposed reorganisation of local government, proceeding would be an irresponsible use of taxpayers' money. He expressed concerns over the Government's proposals to grant the Mayor planning powers, which he believed would adversely affect rural areas. Cllr Vellacott stressed the importance of maintaining a five-year land supply and appreciated that the authority was above this threshold, enabling it to continue exercising control over development. He also advocated for neighbourhood plans and highlighted the necessity of consulting residents.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed to:

Rescind the Motion of Council on 17 October 2024, in relation to the commencement of the New East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

59. Questions From Members

No questions had been received.

60. Pay Policy Statement

The HR Manager presented this report (Z135, previously circulated), which invited the Council to agree to the Pay Policy Statement for 2025-26. She explained that the Council was required to approve a Pay Policy Statement as part of the Localism Act. Cllr Alan Sharp thanked the HR Manager for her efforts on this matter. It was a statutory obligation that the Council needed to agree to by 31 March. Cllr Christine Colbert suggested that the lump sum payment for outstanding staff performance should be a specified amount rather than 1% of basic pay, to benefit lower-paid staff. Cllr Lorna Dupré proposed that all Council officers receive a real living wage of £12.60 per hour. The HR Manager acknowledged that these issues could be considered in a future review. Cllr Ian Bovingdon reported that the Finance and Assets Committee had discussed this issue and would assist with any review, expressing gratitude to the HR Manager for her work.

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed to:

Approve and adopt the 2025-26 Pay Policy Statement.

61. Recommendations from Committees and other Member Bodies

Council considered report Z136, previously circulated, detailing recommendations from two meetings of the Finance and Assets Committees as follows:

1. Finance & Assets Committee – 28 November 2024

a) Treasury Operations Mid-Year Review 2024-25

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously resolved:

That the Mid-Year Review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, be noted.

2. Finance & Assets Committee – 30 January 2025

a) Annual Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

Cllr Alan Sharp proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed:

That the 2026/27 figures had been corrected and checked and approval given to:

- i. The 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy
- ii. The Annual Investment Strategy
- iii. The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement
- iv. The Prudential and Treasury Indicators

b) Constitutional Update – Contract Procedures

Cllr Alan Sharp explained that this was required to ensure our Constitution remained in line with the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force on 24th February 2025. He proposed, and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed:

that the updated Contract Procedure Rules, at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved as an update to the Council's Constitution.

62. East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC) – loan deadline extension request

The Director Finance introduced this report (Z138, already circulated), which invited the Council to respond to East Cambs Trading Company's (ECTC) request to extend the loan repayment deadline from March 2027 to March 2029. This request was prompted by an opportunity to collaborate with Haddenham Community Land Trust to develop approximately 30 properties, one third of which were affordable homes.

Cllr Anna Bailey was delighted to endorse the report's recommendations, as the ECTC had previously collaborated with Haddenham Community Land Trust to provide high-quality new homes.

Cllr Gareth Wilson expressed his support for the proposed affordable housing development in Haddenham, highlighting the importance of community backing. He noted that residents supported the Community Land Trust and would likely back this initiative. Cllr Ian Bovingdon agreed, stating that existing ECTC developments were excellent examples, and he expressed his support for the proposed development.

Cllr Lorna Dupré backed the Haddenham Community Land Trust and the loan extension. She hoped that 40% of the homes constructed in the Haddenham development would be affordable housing.

Cllr John Trapp stated that he supported the provision of additional affordable housing and the objectives of Haddenham Community Land Trust, but he voiced concerns about the extension of an unconditional loan.

Cllr Anna Bailey explained that the ECTC had an incentive to pay back its loan in a timely manner as this would minimise the interest paid and would maximise the number of affordable housing units constructed.

Cllr Alan Sharp backed the recommendations in the report as they would offer affordable housing for residents. The ECTC had an excellent record, and the Council should take pride in it.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Alan Sharp seconded the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken, and with 26 votes in favour and 1 abstention, it was agreed:

- i. To approve the ECTC request for a loan repayment extension from March 2027 to 2029, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report; and
- ii. To authorise the Director Finance and Director Legal to amend the Loan Agreement and Debenture Agreement to implement (i) above.

63. Council Tax, Revenue and Capital Budgets

The Director Finance presented this report (Z139, previously circulated), which outlined the Council's proposed revenue budget, capital strategy, and the required level of Council Tax for 2025/26. It also evaluated the robustness of the budgets and the adequacy of reserves while updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Director Finance explained that following the decision to rescind the motion for a new Local Plan, Members should review the revised appendices 2 and 3 without the Local Plan costs. This change positively impacted the Finance and Assets Committee Report, reducing the Surplus Savings Reserve requirement for balancing the 2025/26 budget from £2.149 million to £1.813 million.

The Director Finance stated that the Council had a balanced budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27 by utilising its Surplus Savings Reserve, which meant no immediate changes to service delivery were necessary. However, the Council faced a significant savings requirement in the third and fourth years of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and funding beyond 2026/27 remains uncertain due to the forthcoming Local Government Fair Funding Review.

Cllr Anna Bailey expressed her pride in supporting a balanced budget with no external borrowing and a freeze on Council Tax for the twelfth consecutive year. Free parking will continue in the district's towns and city centre with no increases in parking charges. Unlike 70% of other authorities, the Council does not charge for garden waste collection and provides additional green and blue bin services at no extra cost. The Council has received £5.8 million from East Cambridgeshire Trading Company (ECTC), with 29% of its income coming from external sources. She voiced concern that the Government's funding review may penalise authorities that have frozen their Council Tax, and she urged the area's MP to advocate for their cause in Westminster.

Cllr Lorna Dupré proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Cllr Christine Whelan.

To approve:

- i) The formal Council Tax Resolution, which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1
- ii) The draft revenue budget for 2025/26 and MTFS for 2026/27 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendices 2(a) and 2(b) – LibDem, specifically to reflect the following proposals:

- To remove the costs associated with the Local Plan (as discussed earlier on the agenda), £300,000 in 2025/26 and 2026/27 and £150,000 in 2027/28
 - To remove the capital cost and all future revenue streams in relation to the Bereavement Centre project
 - To fund the initial capital cost (£600,000) and then on-going revenue costs to implement Civil Parking Enforcement within the District (£40,000 in 2026/27 and future years). (Capital cost to be funded from a revenue contribution)
 - To increase the Environment Fund from £100,000 to £200,000 per year
 - To provide funding for Arts and tourism £100,000 per year
 - To build in a £200,000 per annum turnover allowance on staff costs in recognition that there will be staff vacancies throughout the year
- iii) A Council Tax freeze in 2025/26
 - iv) The draft Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3 - LibDem
 - v) The draft Capital Strategy and financing as set out in Appendix 4 - LibDem
 - vi) The 2025/26 Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 5
 - vii) The application of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure 40% Business Rate relief (which will be fully funded by the Government through Section 31) as detailed in sections 6.6 to 6.7 of this report and any other Business Rate reliefs that may be announced in the national budget (as detailed in section 6.8).
 - viii) The changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and premiums for Long-Term Empty and Second Homes as detailed in sections 11.8 and 11.9 of this report.

PROPOSER: Cllr Lorna Dupre
SECONDER: Cllr Christine Whelan

Cllr Dupré explained that the amendment would allocate additional funding for tourism and the arts, as the current administration had transferred these responsibilities to the City of Ely Council. The amendment also proposed local climate initiatives and civil parking enforcement. Funding would arise from the £200,000 set aside for unfilled officer posts and halting the crematorium development in Mepal. The proposals did not necessitate an increase in Council Tax.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that civil parking enforcement was the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council, and she suggested that the proposal be made to them, as they had agreed to implement it in South Cambridgeshire at no cost to the district council. She added that the £600,000 budgeted in the amendment would not suffice to cover the costs, estimating that expenses for Fenland could reach £1 million

and that East Cambridgeshire had more roads. In rural areas, parking enforcement often incurs higher expenses than revenue. She estimated that four enforcement officers would be needed, significantly exceeding the £40,000 per year allocated in the budget amendment. She suggested that the Council would have to charge for all car parking to cover these costs. The proposed crematorium at Mepal would generate income, while the site currently incurred maintenance and vandalism costs. She explained that the responsibilities for Ely's facility had been transferred to the City of Ely Council at their request. She argued that funding proposals through staff vacancies were irresponsible, which pressured managers to delay recruitment. She concluded that although the amendment sought to keep Council Tax frozen, it could significantly impact the budget in the long term.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott stated that the Council had already committed to building a crematorium in Mepal, which he believed would be successful. He could not support an amendment to reverse this decision. He criticised the introduction of civil parking enforcement, claiming it would be more costly than beneficial, and suggested that the police handle illegal parking instead. He questioned the funding sources for civil parking enforcement, pointing out inconsistencies in budget allocations and queried why it was being funded through the capital budget for community transport. He concluded that the proposals shared only the previous evening had not received adequate scrutiny and should not be approved.

Cllr Mark Inskip reported an annual underspend of over £200,000 on the staffing budget due to unfilled vacancies. This underspend could be utilised to support the arts and tourism sectors, benefiting both Ely and the district's businesses. The district currently lacked civil parking enforcement, which had resulted in increased illegal parking. The proposed amendment sought to collaborate with the community to reduce the carbon footprint and tackle climate change.

Cllr Bill Hunt stated that the Council was well-regarded among visitors because they could moor their boats and park their cars free of charge. He opposed expenditure on civil parking enforcement and other traffic controls, arguing that depending on potential staff vacancies for funding could result in external borrowing. Therefore, he would not support the amendment.

Cllr Alan Sharp anticipated that the Finance and Assets Committee would discuss the business case for Babylon Arts. It had cost Fenland District Council £1 million for car park enforcement road markings and signage, which could prove unpopular with the public, as it had on Mill Road, Cambridge. He explained that an underspend due to staff vacancies could result in higher temporary staff costs, making it an unreliable funding source for other projects.

Cllr John Trapp reported that residents were complaining about illegal parking in Ely, Soham, and other areas within the district, but no action had been taken. Although car parking enforcement had been promised, it did not occur. Funding could be sourced from fines, similar to Mildenhall. He suggested that investing in cycleways would be more beneficial than the proposed crematorium, which he deemed unviable.

Cllr Charlotte Cane explained that only capital grants were available for arts and tourism groups, whereas many organisations needed administrative support, which

this proposed amendment would provide. Several members noted that residents frequently raised parking issues.

Cllr Christine Whelan stated that the amendment aimed to address residents' needs by supporting parish councils in achieving net zero and funding organisations such as Babylon Arts.

Councillor Anna Bailey noted that supporting the initiatives of the amendment would require increasing the Council Tax, rather than freezing it for the twelfth consecutive year. The Council managed Explore East Cambs, which promoted local attractions online, and a new tourism app was set to be launched with funding from the Combined Authority. The City of Ely Council had requested to assume responsibility for organisations in the city centre, but Councillor Bailey clarified that parking enforcement continued to be the responsibility of the County Council and the police.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment, and these were cast as follows:

For (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Against (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Abstain (0)

The amendment was defeated.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott backed the report's recommendations to freeze Council Tax and keep parking charges unchanged while enhancing waste services, planning and community facilities.

Cllr Lorna Dupré remarked that the budget represented a missed opportunity to invest in tourism, the arts, climate change initiatives, and civil parking enforcement. She highlighted the administration's unsuccessful collaboration with the police regarding parking controls and their decision to decline a County Council grant to address this issue. Cllr Dupré argued that if the crematorium project went ahead, it could instigate a price war with existing providers. She concluded that while the Council benefited from the Government's funding system, the budget did not satisfy residents' needs and desires.

Cllr Alan Sharp explained that the Finance and Assets Committee would review robust business cases from organisations applying for grants. He concluded that the public had supported the current administration through their votes in 2015, 2019, and 2023.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that the administration had balanced the budget while providing free car parking and funding for tourism and the arts. She anticipated that

in 2028, the Council would merge into a unitary authority, likely increasing Council Tax.

Cllr Anna Bailey explained that the administration supported tourism and the arts and would collaborate with stakeholders in the future. She had not requested civil parking enforcement from the County Council but had asked the police to address illegal parking. She encouraged members in favour of civil parking enforcement to reach out to the County Council. Cllr Bailey expressed pride in the infrastructure investments made during her six years as Leader of the Council and in the decision to freeze Council Tax again.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed the recommendations in the report, with Cllr Julia Huffer seconding them. A vote was taken, and the results were as follows:

For (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Against (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Abstain (0)

Council agreed to approve:

- a) The formal Council Tax Resolution which calculates the Council Tax requirement as set out in Appendix 1
- b) The draft revenue budget for 2025/26 and MTFS for 2026/27 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendices 2(a) and 2(b)
- c) A Council Tax freeze in 2025/26
- d) The draft Statement of Reserves as set out in Appendix 3
- e) The draft Capital Strategy and financing as set out in Appendix 4.
- f) The 2025/26 Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 5.
- g) The application of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure 40% Business Rate relief (which will be fully funded by the Government through Section 31) as detailed in sections 6.6 to 6.7 of this report and any other Business Rate reliefs that may be announced in the national budget (as detailed in section 6.8).
- h) The changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and premiums for Long-Term Empty and Second Homes as detailed in sections 11.8 and 11.9 of this report.

64. Community Infrastructure Levy – Infrastructure List & Governance

The Director Community presented this report (Z137, previously circulated), inviting the Council to consider amendments to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Infrastructure List and Governance Arrangements. She explained that three changes were proposed, and updated figures were detailed in the report and appendices.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that adopting the Community Infrastructure Levy, which enabled the Council to collect over £35 million for infrastructure, was one of the most successful initiatives undertaken by the authority. £6 million of this funding had been allocated to parish and town councils within the district. She explained that to better reflect the area's changing needs, the administration aimed to reprofile the fund's objectives to support projects throughout the district.

Cllr Lorna Dupré requested that the Council suspend Standing Order 20 to remove the funding for the crematorium at Mepal. The Chair explained that a two-thirds majority of those present, which amounted to 18 members, was needed to suspend Standing Orders.

A vote was taken, and with 13 votes in favour and 14 votes against:
The request to suspend Standing Order 20 was rejected.

Cllr Lorna Dupré expressed her disappointment that the Council would not discuss an amendment to allocate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for the crematorium project. She believed these funds should be redirected to other projects, such as the Soham Medical Centre, and said she would vote against the recommendation.

Cllr Charlotte Cane concurred with Cllr Dupré that the CIL funding should not be allocated to the proposed crematorium. She maintained that the funds should be directed towards Littleport Schools, leisure services, the expansion of the country park, and the Staploe Health Centre in Soham. She was not assured by assertions that these projects would receive funding in the future.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott backed funding for a crematorium at Mepal, which would offer a much-needed service for grieving residents. Although healthcare was not a statutory responsibility, the Council financed it while balancing other priorities.

Cllr Mark Inskip opposed funding for the proposed crematorium, which would have to compete with existing private sector facilities and, potentially, other crematoriums under a new authority. Instead, he argued that these funds should be used to support inclusive play and open spaces, improvements to schools in Littleport, an extension of the country park, or to fund much-needed health services in the district. He questioned how one could argue that funding would be made available for these projects in the future when that future was so uncertain due to the proposed local government reorganisation.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that the Council should promote infrastructure such as cycle paths to benefit residents now, instead of spending money on vanity projects that a larger unitary authority would take over.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that the opposition group's amendment was shared only a few minutes before the meeting, leaving inadequate time for proper consideration. Cllr Anna Bailey described the proposal as a negating amendment based on misunderstanding how CIL funding works. She confirmed that the administration would fund facilities when they were ready, including accessible play areas. Cllr Bailey explained that Staploe Medical Centre had been on the CIL funding list since

2015, but no funds had been allocated due to the absence of an application and a lack of planning permission. The Council pledged to fund the final third of the medical centre's costs but was still waiting for the request.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed, and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations outlined in the report. Cllr Lorna Dupré requested a recorded vote. A vote was taken, and the votes were cast as follows:

For (14): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Against (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, Caroline Shepherd, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Abstain (0)

The Council agreed to:

- a) Approve the Infrastructure List as set out in Appendix 2
- b) Approve the draft Governance Arrangements as set out in Appendix 3, and
- c) Authorise the Director Community, in consultation with the Chair of Finance & Assets Committee, to spend CIL receipts from the Kennett Garden Village Development as detailed in 3.12 of this report.

65. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Update Reports

Council

Agreed to:

Note the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority.

The meeting concluded at 8:33 pm

Chair.....

Date.....