



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Operational Services Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 4:30 pm on
Monday 18 November 2024

Present

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Kelli Pettitt
Cllr Alan Sharp (arrived at 4:38 pm)
Cllr John Trapp (substitute)
Cllr Ross Trent
Cllr Lucius Vellacott (Vice Chair)
Cllr Christine Whelan

Officers

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Ankers – ECSS Finance Manager
Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Emma Graves – Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer
Emma Grima – ECSS Director Commercial
Peter Ord – Scientific Officer
Ian Smith – Director Finance
Catherine Sutherland – Waste Development and Support Manager

In Attendance

Lis Every – Chair of East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership

31. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted.

32. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christine Colbert and Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann.

Cllr John Trapp was in attendance, as substitute for Cllr Christine Colbert.

33. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34. Minutes

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:

- Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith and Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann to be included in the attendance list.
- Cllr Christine Whelan's name correctly spelt in the third paragraph of minute 21.
- The word "bins" was amended to "bags" in the fifth paragraph of minute 22.

35. Chair's Announcements

The Chair had no announcements.

36. Community Safety Partnership 6 Monthly Report

The Committee considered a report, Z89 previously circulated, from the Chair of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (ECCSP) on the Board meetings held since June 2024. The Neighbourhood and Community Safety Team Leader introduced Lis Every, the Chair of the ECCSP, who presented the six-monthly report from the Partnership. She highlighted the following points in the report:

- The Partnership had successfully co-ordinated the views and the work of its different partners over the last six months.
- The problem solving group addressed minor issues raised by residents.
- More serious issues were considered by the delivery group.
- The Partnership also considered strategic issues passed down from the Government.
- Strategic assessments identified the issues facing the district.
- Recent research had analysed antisocial behaviour in the district.
- The district was a low crime area and so a small numerical increase in crime would be a large percentage increase.
- Councillors were urged to ensure that all crime was reported.
- The Partnership had fed into the County Council's district-wide youth survey.
- Pockets of youth anti-social behaviour had been identified in Bottisham, Burwell, Ely East, Ely West, Fordham, Isleham, Littleport, Soham and Stretham.
- Preventive work was important and the decline in youth services in the district was a concern.
- Haddenham had a youth council that engaged with the parish council.

- ECDC Youth Fusion events had been held in Burwell and Haddenham, with support from the CSP.
- The Partnership would welcome engagement with all District Councillors, as this had been a proven way of addressing local issues.

Membership of the Partnership

In response to a query from Cllr Mark Inskip, Lis Every explained that efforts would continue to encourage a representative from the Probationary Service to attend meetings of the Partnership as they could provide vital information on issues such as reoffending. She hoped that a representative from local education would join the Partnership. It was noted that the Partnership had benefited in the past from input from a business representative and hopefully would do so again.

Strategic assessment

It was agreed that the strategic assessment on anti-social behaviour carried out by the Partnership should be shared with all councillors.

Youth engagement

Lis Every reported that efforts were being made to provide activities for the youth in the district and encourage dialogue between parish councils and young people, in order to prevent anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Disappointment was expressed at the closure of the youth centre at Fordham. It was noted that the Connections Bus was visiting villages and towns in the district that did not have a youth centre. Councillor John Trapp suggested that the East Cambridgeshire police cadets, who were the largest in the county, could visit the district's villages.

Engaging with the Partnership

The Chair suggested that a meeting should be organised to allow Lis Every to address councillors on how to engage with residents on crime reduction. Lis Every explained that the Partnership encouraged parish councils to run community safety forums which co-ordinated the efforts of different stakeholders. She reported that the Partnership had very little funding and thanked the Council for its financial and administrative support.

It was resolved to:

Note the report at Appendix 1 from the Chair of the East Cambridgeshire Safety Partnership.

37. Quarter 2 2024/25 Performance Report for the Waste and Street Cleansing Services

The Committee considered a report, Z90 previously circulated, which provided Members with details of the Quarter 2 performance report for the delivery of the waste and street cleansing services by East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS). The Waste Development and Support Manager presented the report and highlighted its main points.

Street cleaning

The Waste Development and Support Manager explained that the Council attempted to clean all streets to a certain grade, which resulted in directing crews to the areas which needed cleaning. It would not be cost effective to attempt to clean all streets regardless of their state of cleanliness. It was suggested that seasonal issues such as leaves falling from trees could benefit from a targeted response.

Recycling rates

It was noted that recycling rates had increased following a decline in recycling, which had been a national phenomenon.

Social media followers

Cllr Mark Inskip suggested that a numerical target for the number of followers would make more sense than a percentage target, when starting from a relatively low base. He highlighted that the Council's own Facebook page had significantly more followers. The Waste Development and Support Manager acknowledged this and that the recycling page would be reviewed as to how it was best used in the future.

Long term sickness

The Waste Development and Support Manager explained that the long term sickness had reduced due to improvements in the management process.

Fly-tipping

It was noted that two large fly-tipping incidents had cost approximately £40,000 to remove, which was about three times the existing budget. Consideration was being given to how to address any future challenges.

It was resolved to:

Note the performance of service delivery for quarter 2 (July to September) 2024/25.

38. Budget Monitoring Report

The Committee considered a report, Z91 previously circulated, to provide Members with details of the financial position for services under the Operational Services Committee. The Director Finance highlighted the main points in the report and invited the Committee to ask questions.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Director Finance explained that whilst additional income from CIL was expected before the end of the year, this budget could also be reduced by future expenditure.

Disabled facilities grants

It was noted that getting approval for works to go ahead was proving to be a challenge when trying to process disabled facilities grants. Occupational Therapist approval was also required. Officers were liaising with our partners on this matter.

It was resolved:

1. To note that the Committee was projecting a yearend overspend of £325,000 on revenue, when compared to its approved budget of £7,134,292.
2. To note that the Committee has a projected capital programme outturn of £2,717,516, an underspend of £1,938,683 when compared to its revised budget (£4,656,199).

39. Air Quality Strategy

The Committee considered a report, Z92 previously circulated, which invited the Committee to approve the Air Quality Strategy 2024-2029, as changes introduced under the Environment Act 2021 required all local authorities to produce an Air Quality Strategy document. The Scientific Officer highlighted the main points in the report and invited the Committee to ask questions.

The Scientific Officer explained that the level of nitrogen dioxide had reduced since 2018 and this indicated that concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) had also reduced, although this was not measured specifically as the Council was not required to do so by the Government. In response to questioning from Cllr Martin Goodearl, the Scientific Officer reported that all emissions in the district were below the legal limits.

Members of the Committee suggested ways in which air quality could be improved:

- Promoting sustainable transport
- Sustainable development
- Including air quality measures in the new Local Plan
- Promoting ultra-low emission and zero emission vehicles
- Regular inspections of rented properties to measure internal air quality

Councillor Martin Goodearl proposed and the Chair seconded the recommendation in the report.

It was unanimously resolved:

To approve the Air Quality Strategy 2024-2029.

40. Review of the Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Licensing Fees

The Committee considered a report, Z93 previously circulated, which recommended the adoption of an updated Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licence fee charging structure. The Senior Environmental Health Officer highlighted the main points in the report and invited the Committee to ask questions.

In response to a question from Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, the Senior Environmental Health Officer explained that the Council inspected properties before approving a licence, though this was not legally required. It was noted that the number of persons dwelling in these properties varied, with the largest in the district having 120 occupiers,

which was well run. It was possible that some houses with multiple occupancy in the district had not applied for a licence. It was agreed that if any councillors had concerns about properties in their wards, they should report these to Environmental Services.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith seconded the recommendations in the report.

It was unanimously resolved to:

1. Approve the updated fees for HMO applications and renewals, with effect from 1st January 2025.
2. Approve a review of the fees from 1st April 2025, which should happen annually in line with the Council wide annual fee and charges budget setting process.

41. Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Dog Fouling

The Committee considered a report, Z94 previously circulated, which recommended an extension of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for dog fouling for the District, first introduced by the Council in 2018. The Senior Environment Health Officer highlighted the main points in the report and invited questions from the Committee.

In response to a questions from members of the Committee, the Senior Environmental Health Officer explained that there were a number of challenges involved in prosecuting for dog fouling, with witnesses either not knowing where the dog owner resided or being concerned about repercussions of reporting a neighbour. It was agreed that responsible owners would always clean up after their dog and those owners who did not were creating a health risk.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Alan Sharp seconded the recommendation in the report.

It was unanimously resolved to:

Approve a further extension to the PSPO covering the control of dog fouling, increasing the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) charges for breaching of dog fouling rules under the PSPO to £100.

42. Service Delivery Plan – 6 Month Performance Update

The Committee considered a report, Z95 previously circulated, which provided Members with an update on the Service Delivery Plans for the first six months of 2024/25. The Director Operations presented the report and invited comments from the Committee. Members thanked officers for the new format of the plans, which clearly displayed whether performance targets were being met.

The Director Operations agreed to ascertain:

- Whether X and Facebook were the only social media being used by the Council, in the Communications Team Service Delivery Plan.
- An explanation on whether the seconds referred to in the monthly target of time taken to answer phone calls was an average figure, in the Customer Services Delivery Plan.
- What had happened to the 25 disrepair complaints that had not been resolved, in the Waste and Environmental Services Delivery Plan.
- The current position on the work on the populating of the service request module to ensure compliance with the enforcement audit, in the Licensing Service Delivery Plan.
- Whether the target for preventing families from becoming homeless should be 100% instead of simply preventing at least 250 households from becoming homeless, in the Housing and Community Advice Delivery Plan.

It was hoped that the Community Sports Facilities grants could be more widely advertised, as the budget was unspent. It was noted that the new Section 106 Officer would be monitoring and processing payments.

It was resolved:

To note the Service Delivery Plans for the first six months of 2024/25.

43. Draft Minutes of Anglia Revenue & Benefits Joint Committee

The Committee received the recent minutes of the Anglia Revenue & Benefits Joint Committee.

It was resolved:

To note the draft minutes of the Anglia Revenue & Benefits Joint Committee of 3 September 2024.

44. Forward Agenda Plan

The Chair explained that the only report due to come to the meeting on 27 January 2025 was the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. It was recommended that the meeting on 27 January 2025 be cancelled and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy report be moved to the meeting on 24 March 2025.

It was resolved:

That the meeting on 27 January 2025 be cancelled and the Forward Plan be noted.

45. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded that the meeting should go into private session. It was resolved unanimously:

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

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

The Committee considered a report, Z96 previously circulated, which considered the ECSS Management Accounts for the three months to 30 September 2024.

It was resolved that:

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

The meeting concluded at 6:02 pm

Chair

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