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**East Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Council – 18 September 2025 – Decision List

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	Two public questions were received and responded to as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
2.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members.	Apologies were received from Cllr Charlotte Cane.	-
3.	-	Declarations of Interests	To receive declarations of interests from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.	The Director Legal explained that as local tax payers, councillors had a non disclosable pecuniary interest in the motion on Council Tax and so they could fully participate in the discussion on that item and vote on it, without having to disclose an interest.	-
4.	-	Minutes – 22 May 2025	To agree the minutes of the meetings held on 22 May 2025.	It was resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2025 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:	Democratic Services
5.	-	Chair's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	The Chair had no announcements.	-
6.	-	Petitions	To receive and petitions	There were no petitions for Council to receive	-
7.	-	Notice of Motions under Procedure Rule 10	The following Motion was received and considered:		Director Operations

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
			<p>I. Local Government Reorganisation. Text of motion at the end of the Decision List Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey Seconder: Cllr Julia Huffer</p> <p>II. Motion to Oppose Proposed Changes to Council Tax Powers. Text of motion at the end of the Decision List Proposer: Cllr Keith Horgan Seconder: Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith</p> <p>III. New Homes Ombudsman. Text of motion at the end of the Decision List Proposer: Cllr Lorna Dupré Seconder: Cllr Chika Akinwale</p> <p>IV. Ely Junction Capacity Improvements. Text of motion at the end of the Decision List</p>	<p>Motion was carried with 14 votes in favour and 13 votes against</p> <p>Motion was carried with 14 votes in favour and 13 votes against</p> <p>The amended Motion was carried unanimously</p> <p>The amended Motion was carried unanimously</p>	

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
			Proposer: Cllr Mark Inskip Seconder: Cllr Christine Colbert		
8.	-	To answer questions from Members.	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Two questions from members were received and the response was given as detailed at the end of the Decision List	-
9.	AA49	Schedule of Items Recommended from Committees and Other Member Bodies	To review the Council's treasury operations during the 2024/25 financial year.	It was resolved: To approve the report detailing the Council's treasury operations during 2024/25, including the prudential indicators and treasury, as set out in the Annual Treasury Management Review (Appendix 1).	Director Finance
10.	AA50	Appointment of Finance Director/Section 151 Officer	To appoint the Council's Section 151 Officer.	It was resolved: To endorse the appointment of Mr Jude Antony as the Council's Section 151 Officer	HR Manager
11.	AA51	Establishment of a Chief Executive Appointments Panel	To agree arrangements for the appointment of the Chief Executive	It was resolved: a) To establish an Appointments Panel to make a recommendation to Council on the appointment of the Chief Executive. b) To appoint the Leader of Council, Chair of Council and Leader of Liberal Democrats and Independent Group to the above panel; and c) Advertise the post on an internal basis in the first instance	HR Manager
12.	AA52	Corporate Plan	To consider the updated Action Plan for 2025-26 to support the implementation of the 2023-27 Corporate Plan.	It was resolved to: a) Approve the updated Action Plan for 2025-26 at Appendix 1 b) Note the completed actions and progress made during the past 12 months	Chief Executive

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
13.	AA53	Local Government Reorganisation – Public and Stakeholder Survey	To provide the results of the Public and Stakeholder Survey undertaken as part of the Local Government Reorganisation business case development	It was resolved to: Note the survey and focus group finding at Appendix 1, 2 and 3.	Director Operations
14.	AA54	Local Government Reorganisation Update	To update the Council on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	It was resolved to: a) Note the progress to date on LGR in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough b) Note the three proposals being delivered by individuals Councils across the region.	Director Operations
15.	-	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	To note the reports for June and July 2025	It was resolved: To note the two reports from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the months of June and July	Democratic Services and Elections Manager

1. Public Question Time

Question from Peter Bates, Chair of the East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network, read out by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager

The East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network fully supports ECDC's initiative to increase the number of agricultural reservoirs across East Cambridgeshire in order to mitigate the impact of climate change. Equally so, the East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network is starting to develop a complementary project, working with Anglian Water to develop a network of Water Conservation Champions across the District – to actively encourage householders and small businesses to save water and their money.

The Water Conservation Champions initiative is one of three key high impact projects that the Network is currently focusing on. It is also developing a network of Community Energy Champions that will offer initial domestic energy saving advice, including renewables – and at the other end of the spectrum - the development of community led and benefit projects like wind turbines, solar PV installations, linked to battery storage and EV Charging points.

The third high impact initiative is the development of community-based local nature recovery projects aligned with the CPCA's Local Nature Recovery Strategy including the ECDC commissioned "Nature Recovery Network for East Cambridgeshire" - Final Report published in 2022.

Questions:

1. How would the Council take the opportunity when planning Agricultural Reservoirs to ensure that they also double the biodiversity of the surrounding reservoir areas and also take the opportunity to plan for increasing access to the general public by improving neighbouring byways and bridleways - public rights of way - particularly as there is a need to increase more access to the countryside for the general public as a result all the housing developments?
2. Does the council think the East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network could play a positive role in further developing this idea? and if so, how can the Network get involved in the project?
3. Will the Council financially support the East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network with its emerging proposal to establish community water conservation champions, whereby such champions actively work with discreet local communities on water saving actions and advice? An initial £5000 to pump-prime this activity would be useful.
4. How will the Council actively support the development of innovative water management/community energy solutions that could also result in sustainable projects like water source heat pumps for heating community buildings, micro-water turbines for electricity production and micro water-cooling systems for Data Centres? Can the Council fund some initial economic growth activities that will increase awareness of such business opportunities?

Response from the Leader, Cllr Anna Bailey

"I want to thank East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network and Mr Bates for the question and all the work that they do. They are heavily invested in this type of work in East Cambridgeshire, so I thank them for everything that they do and their support for all our efforts at this Council.

“We have a recently published report that we commissioned from Eastern Powerhouse, which I’m delighted to be talking about and it has already gained an awful lot of attention. We sent it off far and wide and I will be alluding to it later when we discuss our Corporate Plan.

“We are constrained by the laws of the land and agricultural reservoirs obviously require planning permission and so access and biodiversity matters are dealt with through the planning process. Whilst we can encourage biodiversity improvements and we certainly do and will, we cannot insist on the doubling of biodiversity surrounding the reservoirs. Actually, in my experience, farmers are very keen to progress this agenda and we can certainly encourage them. Access will depend on the location of any future reservoirs, because for example, if they are on private farmland the Council cannot insist on public access.

“The Council has only recently published its reservoirs feasibility study, so the project is obviously at an early stage of work. We will absolutely keep East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network fully informed of progress and any opportunities to be involved. The Council is of course committed to water efficiency, as far as we are allowed to be by the constraints that we work in and we promote sustainable water management, not only by the Agricultural Reservoirs project but we have of course included the actions to achieve this in our own Climate and Nature Strategy. Four of the top twenty actions for the 2024/25 strategy were water related, which shows you how important it is rapidly becoming. Our Climate Change and Natural Environment Team are available to help you with your proposal and our economic development team would also be happy to support local businesses with water management and community energy solutions.”

Question from Marianne Pickles, read out by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager

Originally, with funding from the CPCA, the Net Zero Villages Project in East Cambridgeshire has been highly successful and oversubscribed resulting in some projects being unable to get funding.

For those not familiar, the Net Zero Villages project took place earlier this year, managed by ECDC and was actively supported by the East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network, including discussing potential options with individual community groups across East Cambridgeshire. Unfortunately, no funds are presently available to re-open the grant scheme, despite considerable demand from community groups looking to save money on their running costs and contribute to reducing their climate emissions.

It is noted that there are going to be some changes at the senior management officer level which if handled sensibly, could result to savings for the Council which could then re-directed to community-based projects.

Q. How can the Council proactively find additional funding internally for such projects as well as seek to identify other funds from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and/or Cambridgeshire County Council, the Greater South East Net Zero Hub and/or Great British Energy – the British government-owned renewable energy investment body?

East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network would be willing to take on the management role of such an initiative, if the Council can find funding. This could also include extending it to the urban areas of Ely and Soham which were not included in the original project.

Response from the Leader, Cllr Anna Bailey

“Before I answer the question, I want to pay tribute to our small officer team for the way in which they have brought together the Net Zero Villages project and also the other projects that have come forward. It was really excellent and inspiring.

“Thank you very much for the question and of course for the offer of support. For those of you who are not aware, the successful Net Zero Villages programme has awarded a total of £150,000 to ten village halls across the district for solar panels, batteries and insulation, which has helped our vital community facilities reduce their running costs and their carbon emissions at the same time.

“Identifying and applying for relevant grants is ongoing part of our work and our officers are continuously seeking new funding opportunities from both internal and external sources, including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Greater South East Net Zero Hub. We will continue exploring all suitable funding streams to enable the development and delivery of impactful community led climate action initiatives across the district.”

7. Notices of Motion

Local Government Reorganisation

The Council notes that:

1. Since the Government’s White Paper on English Devolution was published in December 2024, Leaders and Officers of the seven principal Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been working together to produce an agreed proposal, or an agreed set of proposals, in time for the final submission deadline in November 2025.
2. The initial work undertaken to support the business case includes a detailed analysis of the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on Adults, Children and SEND services; a financial analysis of the relative funding allocation from Government; analysis of demand across other services such as homelessness and environmental services; and analysis of the viability of the tax base (business rates, Council Tax, and other income) to support each Unitary configuration.

3. This work has led to the development of three different options all of which are for a two Unitary solution across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. See below the three options.

Proposal A North-West/South-East

- i. **Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions
- ii. **Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Proposal B North/South

- i. **Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils along with County Council functions
- ii. **Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District along with County Council functions

Proposal C East/West

- i. **Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions
- ii. **Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

4. Each Council across the region has directly input into the development of a suite of baseline data to be used in each business case and is now directly inputting into a chosen business case. Based on the shared data and analysis undertaken to date, at this stage East Cambs District Council officers are inputting directly into the development of the Proposal B business case and indirectly (through sharing of data) into Proposals A and C.
5. The business case for Proposal A is being led by Cambridgeshire County Council. This proposal is currently the preferred option of the County Council's Administration. District Councils are not directly inputting into the development of this business case.
6. The business case for Proposal B is being led by Cambridge City Council and is the only business case that has direct input from all District Councils and an upper tier authority, namely Peterborough City Council.
7. South Cambs District Council and Cambridge City Council Leaders have given public support for the creation of a Greater Cambridge Unitary – The Greater Cambridge Unitary comprises of the geography covered by these two Councils only, which forms part of Proposal B.
8. The business case for Proposal C is being led by Huntingdonshire District Council but is not receiving direct input from either of the upper tier authorities or any other District Councils at this stage. For clarity, HDC offered to lead on this piece of work as collectively the Leaders felt it was too soon to narrow down the options to just two.

9. A fourth Unitary option, which proposes the creation of three Unitaries across the region, is being developed by Peterborough City Council, however this does not have the backing of any other Council within Cambridgeshire, as a three unitary option was shown to be unlikely to be a financially sustainable solution longer term.
10. The Council can only endorse one or none of the Unitary proposals at the point of submission to Government in November 2025.

The Council believes that:

1. Each proposal has benefits and disbenefits for our residents, businesses, visitors and communities in general; however the early analysis shows that some proposals will have a greater impact than others.
2. Proposal A
 - Appears to have a logical geographical alignment due to areas in the south of our district bordering Greater Cambridge.
 - However, this option could see East Cambridgeshire being folded into the Cambridge Growth Company which is required to build 150,000 new homes in the Cambridge area with the Government directing where those homes will be located, rather than local people.
 - Would see East Cambridgeshire residents grouped with the highest Council Tax charging areas and see the biggest increase in Council Tax of all Unitary options for our residents.
 - Would also mean East Cambridgeshire would be joining an area where the existing District Councils have decided to permanently adopt a 4 day working week for 5 days' pay funded by tax payers.
3. Proposal B
 - Protects our district from over development and handing over control of the planning of new homes to the Cambridge Growth Company.
 - Brings rural districts that share similar characteristics and challenges together, giving them a stronger voice, while still being economically underpinned by a vibrant city.
 - By virtue of its geographic and population size will need to maintain a council footprint presence and service delivery model in the northern Unitary, rooted in the local communities it serves, like the successful North Yorkshire Unitary established in early 2023.
 - Meets the Government's ambition to deliver growth by forming a Greater Cambridge region in a southern Unitary that has the scale required to be financially sustainable, given its high tax base and future growth.
4. Proposal C
 - Would align similar geographies and Councils with similar housing growth ambitions and constraints.
 - However, it may lead to a northern Unitary that has such a low funding base, it would struggle to support an aging population and increased demands in Social Care and SEND services.

The Council resolves to:

1. Continue to actively and directly participate in the development of the Proposal B business case.

2. Consider all three business cases (A, B and C) at a meeting of the Council on 20th November 2025 prior to submission to Government.

Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey

Seconder: Cllr Julia Huffer

Motion to Oppose Proposed Changes to Council Tax Powers

Council notes:

1. The Government is considering proposals to allow local authorities to set their own Council Tax bands, rates, and property valuations.
2. These changes would dismantle the nationally consistent framework that currently governs Council Tax, introducing significant regional variation.
3. Council Tax already exhibits stark disparities across the UK:
 - a) The average Band D bill in England is £2,171 but varies from £829 in Westminster to £2,226 in Nottingham. (see note 1)
 - b) Residents in poorer areas pay a higher percentage of their income on Council Tax — up to 10.3% in places like Blackpool and Teignbridge — compared to just 2% in wealthier boroughs like Westminster. (see note 2)
 - c) The poorest 10% of households pay 7% of their income on Council Tax, while the richest 10% pay just 1.2%. (see note 1)
 - d) Council Tax arrears have reached a record £8.3 billion, with 4.4 million people behind on payments — a third of whom live below the poverty line. (see note 1)
4. Nine out of ten councils in eastern England, including those in East Anglia, have already opted for the maximum allowable Council Tax increase of 4.99% for 2025–26. (see note 5)
5. If councils gain full control over rates and valuations, this could lead to even steeper increases, especially in areas facing financial pressure or service demand.
6. East Cambridgeshire District Council has frozen its share of Council Tax for the 12th consecutive year, maintaining Band D at £142.14. (see note 6)
7. This contrasts sharply with neighbouring districts, and under a decentralised system, such disparities could widen—leading to confusion and perceived unfairness among residents.

Council believes:

- A. Council Tax should remain a nationally regulated system to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability.
- B. The valuation of properties is a complex and sensitive process that should remain under the purview of an impartial national body, not subject to local political pressures.
- C. Local autonomy over tax bands and valuations risks deepening regional inequalities, as wealthier areas with high property values can raise more revenue, while poorer areas face greater financial strain. (see note 3)

- D. The administrative burden of implementing localised valuations and banding would be substantial, requiring new systems, staff training, and oversight — diverting resources from essential services. (see note 4)
- E. A fragmented system would confuse taxpayers, reduce public trust, and make it harder to compare services and costs across regions.

Council resolves to:

- A. Oppose the proposed changes that would allow councils to set their own Council Tax bands, rates, and property valuations.
- B. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to express our concerns and urge the Government to retain a nationally consistent Council Tax framework.
- C. Request that our local MPs raise this issue in Parliament and advocate for a fair and transparent taxation system.
- D. Collaborate with other councils, the Local Government Association, and relevant stakeholders to build a coalition against these proposals and promote alternative reforms that enhance fairness without fragmenting the system.

Proposer: Cllr Keith Horgan

Seconded: Cllr Christine Ambrose-Smith

Sources:

1. <https://moneyweek.com/personal-finance/council-tax-burden-highest-lowest-uk>
2. https://www.taxpayersalliance.com/mapping_britain_s_council_tax_burden
3. <https://www.bing.com/search?q=impact+of+local+Council+Tax+autonomy+on+regional+inequalities&toWww=1&redig=791556156BA44C6BABE461EA99D19A08>
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/modernising-and-improving-the-administration-of-council-tax/modernising-and-improving-the-administration-of-council-tax>
5. <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/national/24946349.analysis-shows-nine-10-areas-facing-maximum-council-tax-rise-england/>
6. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/council-tax/council-tax-bands>

New Homes Ombudsman and Consumer Code for New Homes

This council notes that

1. The New Homes Ombudsman Service exists to help customers resolve issues with their new homes, which the registered developer has been unable or unwilling to fix.
2. The primary purpose of the service is to provide a free and independent redress service to customers, which can impartially assess and adjudicate on issues that have arisen that fall within the Ombudsman's scope. This includes complaints around the reservation, legal completion and complaints management processes, or issues or defects that have arisen at or after occupation and which are not major defects.

3. The New Homes Ombudsman Service can resolve complaints through early resolution, negotiation, mediation, and adjudication.
4. The Consumer Code for New Homes, approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, has been established to ensure that best practice is followed by registered developers in respect of the marketing and selling of new homes to consumers. The Code also sets expected standards for after sales customer care services.
5. The Council's own development company, East Cambs Trading Company trading as Palace Green Homes is a member of the Consumer Code for New Homes.
6. The Building Safety Act 2022 makes provision for the New Homes Ombudsman to be mandatory. However, the secondary legislation is not yet in place.

This council further recognises that

- a) If a developer is not on the register of developers, or the customer reserved their property before their registration date, the Ombudsman will be unable to help.
- b) The New Homes Ombudsman is also unable to help with homes that are sold as affordable homes, or those under a shared ownership scheme or bought as part of a buy-to-let scheme.

This council expresses concern that a number of developers are not registered with an independent resolution service.

This council therefore resolves to encourage developers building in East Cambridgeshire to register with an independent resolution service, for example, the New Homes Ombudsman or the Consumer Code for New Homes.

Proposer: Cllr Lorna Dupré

Seconder: Cllr Chika Akinwale

Ely Junction capacity improvements

This council expresses its grave concern that the Government's announcement in June of progress on fifty rail and road schemes once again failed to include Ely Junction.

The congestion at this bottleneck means it is unable to handle the demand for both freight and passenger services. Solving this would return £4.89 for every £1 spent; remove 98,000 HGV journeys; enable an additional 2,900 freight services a year from Felixstowe; reduce carbon emissions by 1.7 million tonnes of CO2 over sixty years; and reduce traffic congestion by 5.6 million hours a year.

It is now twenty-three years since the first business case for upgrading the junction was made, and yet successive governments have failed to make the investment in this vital piece of infrastructure for our region and for the country.

This council calls on the Government to release funds for planning the project, conduct a rapid departmental review of the scheme and its benefits to present to the Treasury, and listen to the concerns of the local MP, businesses, and stakeholders including this council at the effect of further delay.

Council agrees to:

1. Instruct the Leader to write to the Secretary of State requesting a rethink on the funding of Ely North junction, pointing out the data and statistics available to support the huge benefits available to all concerned for a positive outcome.
2. Provide a copy of the letter to local media to demonstrate that the Council is united in fighting for this important piece of infrastructure for East Cambs and the country.
3. Instruct the Leader to write to British Rail and Network Rail executive management teams asking for their full backing of the planned upgrade, including a request to both bodies for how they think we, the local authority, could further assist with progress on the project.

Proposer: Cllr Mark Inskip

Seconder: Cllr Christine Colbert

8. To Answer Question from Members

Question from Cllr James Lay, to Cllr Julia Huffer, Chair of Operational Services Committee

- How many affordable homes and homes for rent have we completed in ECDC in the last year?
- How many homes for rent have gone to the 1,000 on the housing register?
- How many of the new rented properties have been let to people from outside Cambridgeshire?

Response from the Chair of Operational Services Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer

“Thank you for the question, Cllr Lay. You will of course be aware that the Council is not a housing provider but we also do not sit idly by. We do what we can through the policies that we have in place and then deliver what we can through East Cambs Trading Company and working with our established CLT network who do remarkable work. We are passionate about delivering genuinely

affordable housing that enables people to live and work locally. Officers are working on both our annual monitoring report and our returns to Government. Once this work is finished we will have the answer to your first question and I will ask our officers to share this information with all members as soon as they are able. However, whilst the numbers are not available for us today for this year, there is good information in the 2023/24 annual monitoring report. That year there were 154 affordable completions and when you add that to the two previous years there were 489 affordable homes. The last three years have been the strongest years and long may this continue. In 2024/25 479 properties were rented. 376 were allocated to people on the East Cambs waiting list but only 7 properties went to people outside Cambridgeshire. We do not know how many of these properties were built in the same year, and as I have already said we are working on this and I will make the information available. I do know that this year, CLT took a huge step forward and are now the proud owners of 10 affordable homes with 5 of those for affordable rent, in fact they welcomed new tenants just this week. This may seem like a small number but that is 10 new affordable homes for people with a strong local connection to their area and there are 50 more homes to come, with 35 of those with affordable rent. In previous years Swaffham Prior, Soham, Stretham, Wilburton, Haddenham and East Cambs CLT have delivered affordable housing that enables people who have a strong local connection to have decent affordable housing. Delivery to date through our CLTs is 91 and 63 of those are affordable rent and there is more to come. Kennett I have already mentioned and Haddenham CLT has ambitions to do more and is actively working with East Cambs Trading Company to make this ambition a reality. It will not count in this year's figures but I would like to thank East Cambs Trading Company as they are on site right now building 27 affordable homes in Ely. A few years back, in this very chamber, we asked them to try and deliver more than our 30% policy on affordable housing and they have delivered for us. 100% of the 27 homes are affordable housing and they are all for social rent. We do all this because we put a place a framework to enable it. We have a company that shares our vision and we have a community led development policy with grants available for start up and pre-development costs. The 100k homes policy are targeted at people who live and work locally and we influence where we can affordable housing to those with a strong local connection. On this last point we work with Accent at their site in Little Downham, which we deliver 39 affordable homes to ensure that our local connection criteria was secured and that extra efforts were made to market the properties in the local area so that people knew that there are affordable homes available that they can access. I am proud of what we have been able to achieve through the actions we have taken. I hope that answers your questions."

Question from Cllr Lucius Vellacott, to Cllr Anna Bailey, Leader of Council

Could the Leader of Council explain her understanding of the circumstances surrounding planning application 25/00437/LBC for Listed Building Consent (Retrospective change of use to secure office) at The Old Dispensary in Ely, initially converted without permission into an office for the Liberal Democrat MP?

Response from the Leader, Cllr Anna Bailey

“Thank you for your question. In fact, there were two planning applications in relation to the Grade 2 listed building the Old Dispensary building on St Marys Street in Ely. They were both submitted by Cllr Gareth Wilson in his capacity as a director of the registered company The Old Dispensary Ely Ltd. One application sought permission for listed building consent, the other was for change of use, away from community use, to secure it for office accommodation for our MP Charlotte Cane. Both applications were retrospective, as the works had already taken place, in breach of planning law and this was confirmed by the planning officer’s report, which stated that the nineteenth century gothic style building lacked both consent for alterations and any approved state of use and that the conversion was unlawful. Cllr Wilson has served for many years on the Planning Committee and it is surprising; I do feel that he ought to have been aware of the need for planning permission. Obviously planning laws exist to protect our communities and our heritage and it is very surprising that work was carried out in breach of planning law. The public have also rightly questioned why Cllr Wilson was removed by Cllr Dupré from his long-standing position on the Planning Committee in May this year. The applications were heard by the Planning Committee in July and indeed were granted retrospective permission. So the position now has been regularised. Cllr Wilson’s fellow company directors are in fact his wife, former East Cambridgeshire District Councillor Pauline Wilson and Mr David Wright who is partner of Cllr Lorna Dupré, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and Deputy Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council and of course they do all stand to profit from rental income paid from Westminster by taxpayers, which does raise questions of ethics, transparency and accountability given the issues that occurred with change of use to the building without planning permission. So it was not a great look or a great start for the new accommodation for our MP but we wish them the best.”