



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 May 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present

Councillor Chika Akinwale	Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor Ian Bovingdon	Councillor James Lay
Councillor David Brown	Councillor David Miller
Councillor Charlotte Cane	Councillor Kelli Pettitt (Chair)
Councillor Christine Colbert	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Lee Denney	Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Ross Trent
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Lucius Vellacott
Councillor Mark Goldsack	Councillor Mary Wade
Councillor Martin Goodearl	Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Kathrin Holtzmann	Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Keith Horgan (Vice Chair)	Councillor Gareth Wilson

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Prayers were led by
Reverend Eleanor Whalley from Soham Parish Church.

A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect following the deaths of former Councillor Allen Alderson, District Councillor for the Swaffhams Ward from 2004 to 2019, and former Councillor Brian Hayes, District Councillor for the Littleport Ward from 1999 to 2003.

Cllr Anna Bailey paid tribute to former Councillor Allen Alderson, stating that he was a true working-class Tory who had served on many committees and working parties, including the Section 106 Working Party, which he had chaired. He had been very supportive to new councillors and she would miss his phone calls on the local issues of the day. She thanked him for his service and expressed her sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Cllr Charlotte Cane paid tribute to former Councillor Brian Hayes, who was an old-style Member, who did his best for his community and was a pleasure to work with on cross party issues. She was sorry to hear of his passing and gave her best wishes to his family and friends. Cllr Cane explained that she knew Allen Alderson well, as he was the former member for the Swaffhams Ward and was well known

in the local area. She often saw him looking for evidence of fly-tipping and talking with local people. She shared his primary concern of delivering affordable housing to younger people. He was an assiduous attender of parish council meetings, where he would listen to concerns and report these to the district council. Many in the Swaffhams would miss him and her thoughts were with his family and friends.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith paid tribute to former Councillor Brian Hayes, who had been an Independent Member for Littleport. He would scrutinise agendas closely, ask serious questions and then reach his own conclusions. He had moved to Littleport from Lincolnshire in the 1980s and became heavily involved in community work, through the Rotary Club and the wool trade charity, which he represented for 30 years. He had died at home, surrounded by his family and Cllr Ambrose Smith had attended his funeral a week ago.

Cllr Alan Sharp paid tribute to former Councillor Allen Alderson, who was dedicated to the villages he represented and their residents. He had fond memories of chance meetings with Allen that would turn into long discussions on the local and national issues of the day. His thoughts were with Allen's family at this sad time.

1. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

2. Election of Chair 2026/27

Cllr Kelli Pettitt was nominated as Council Chair by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer. A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Cllr Kelli Pettitt be elected as Chair of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Cllr Pettitt then read aloud, and signed, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chair of Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared an interest in motion 9a and the amended motion 9b as the local MP. She took no part in the debates and did not vote.

5. Minutes – 24 February 2026

It was resolved unanimously:

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 February 2026 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:
The end of the penultimate sentence of the second paragraph on page 14 to read: "... affordable housing was being delivered, including an opportunity in the next phase of the Haddenham Land Trust."

6. Election of Vice-Chair 2026/27

Cllr Keith Horgan was nominated as Council Vice-Chair by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer. A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Cllr Keith Horgan be elected as Vice Chair of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Cllr Keith Horgan then read aloud, and signed, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Vice Chair of Council.

7. Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced that the Knife Angel, made from 100,000 knives confiscated by Police, was on display on Palace Green in Ely until 17 June and she urged Members to go and see it.

8. Petitions

No petitions had been received.

9. Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10

(i) Future of the A10

Cllr Lorna Dupré suggested that Cllr Anna Bailey had an interest in the motion, as it proposed that the Leader should write to the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Cllr Bailey was both the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Mayor. Following a brief adjournment, Cllr Lucius Vellacott announced that the motion would be amended to request that the Chief Executive would write to the Chief Executive of the Combined Authority. Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed, and Cllr Lee Denney seconded the following motion.

East Cambridgeshire District Council, hereinafter referred to as 'the Council', notes that:

- The A10 corridor between Ely and Cambridge is a strategically important route for commuters, freight, agricultural traffic and local communities across East Cambridgeshire and the wider region

- The road currently carries more than 18,000 vehicles per day and remains largely single carriageway, resulting in congestion, delays, safety concerns and reduced reliability for residents and businesses
- The need to upgrade the A10 corridor has been recognised for decades, with studies dating back to the 1970s examining options to increase capacity and improve connectivity between Ely and Cambridge
- More recently, Cambridgeshire County Council undertook extensive option development work considering highway capacity improvements, junction upgrades, modal shift, and active travel measures, the outcome of which was a recommendation for full dualling of the corridor with a parallel active travel route
- This work was subsequently taken forward by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), culminating in a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2020, which proposed a range of primarily road-based improvement options, including online and offline dualling of the A10, with associated cycling and walking infrastructure
- Public engagement undertaken in 2020 demonstrated strong local interest in addressing congestion and improving connectivity along the corridor
- The A10 corridor is critical to supporting planned growth across the region, including up to 17,000 new homes and 14,000 new jobs, and is essential to maintaining the economic vitality of East Cambridgeshire and neighbouring areas
- The importance of the A10 upgrade is recognised by Homes England, which is planning a further study of the route through the Strategic Place Partnership, with work having begun in January 2026.

The Council believes that:

- Full dualling of the A10 between Ely and Cambridge is the most effective long-term solution to address congestion, improve safety, and provide the capacity required to support the sustainable growth of the region
- Failure to progress the scheme risks constraining economic development, worsening congestion for residents and businesses and undermining confidence in the delivery of essential regional infrastructure
- Given the public funds spent over decades, the years of technical work already undertaken and the clear strategic importance of the route, the A10 dualling project must remain a priority within regional transport planning.

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

- Reaffirm its strong support for the full dualling of the A10 between Ely and Cambridge, including provision for high-quality active travel infrastructure
- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Chief Executive of the CPCA requesting that the A10 dualling scheme

remains a strategic transport priority and that work to progress the project continues without delay

- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to request that the CPCA provide clarity on the programme for further development work, including the study by the Strategic Place Partnership and the pathway towards delivery of the scheme
- Instruct the Director (Community) to share this motion with neighbouring local authorities, Members of Parliament representing communities along the A10 corridor, and relevant regional stakeholders, in order to invite them to demonstrate their support for progressing the scheme on a cross-area basis

Cllr Alison Whelan proposed and Cllr Lorna Dupré seconded the following amendments:

Future of the A10

East Cambridgeshire District Council, hereinafter referred to as 'the Council', notes that:

- The A10 corridor between Ely and Cambridge is a strategically important route for commuters, freight, agricultural traffic and local communities across East Cambridgeshire and the wider region
- The road currently carries more than 18,000 vehicles per day and remains largely single carriageway, resulting in congestion, delays, safety concerns and reduced reliability for residents and businesses
- The need to upgrade the A10 corridor has been recognised for decades ~~with studies dating back to the 1970s examining options to increase capacity and improve connectivity between Ely and Cambridge~~
- More recently, Cambridgeshire County Council undertook extensive option development work considering highway capacity improvements, junction upgrades, modal shift, and active travel measures, ~~the outcome of which was a recommendation for full dualling of the corridor with a parallel active travel route~~ **which helped inform later proposals for a range of interventions including junction improvements, dualling options and associated active travel measures**
- This work was subsequently taken forward by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), culminating in a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2020, which proposed a range of primarily road-based improvement options, including online and offline dualling of the A10, with associated cycling and walking infrastructure
- Public engagement undertaken in 2020 demonstrated strong local interest in addressing congestion and improving connectivity along the corridor, **while also highlighting concerns around environmental impact, deliverability and the need for sustainable transport improvements**

- The A10 corridor is critical to supporting planned growth across the region, including up to 17,000 new homes and 14,000 new jobs, and is essential to maintaining the economic vitality of East Cambridgeshire and neighbouring areas
- The importance of the A10 upgrade is recognised by Homes England, which is planning a further study of the route through the Strategic Place Partnership, with work having begun in January 2026.
- **The Council further notes that the Government has indicated that the scheme is not currently a national funding priority, making it difficult to secure funding for full corridor dualling in the near term**
- **The Council further notes that proposed Local Government Reorganisation may result in the southern and northern sections of the route falling under different successor authorities, which could complicate the governance, prioritisation and delivery of any major corridor-wide scheme**

The Council believes that:

- ~~Full dualling of the A10~~ **Improving the A10 by dualling and other measures** between Ely and Cambridge is the most effective long-term solution to address congestion, improve safety, and provide the capacity required to support the sustainable growth of the region
- Failure to progress the ~~scheme~~ **improvements to the corridor** risks constraining economic development, worsening congestion for residents and businesses and undermining confidence in the delivery of essential regional infrastructure
- Given the public funds spent over decades, the years of technical work already undertaken and the clear strategic importance of the route, the ~~A10 dualling project~~ **corridor programme** must remain a priority within regional transport planning.
- **The Council believes that, while partial or full dualling may still form part of the longer-term solution, it may not be achievable in the near future given current funding constraints, delivery uncertainty and wider governance changes**
- **The Council further believes that a phased approach, beginning with urgent junction improvements, safety works, active travel provision and other targeted interventions, is the most responsible and deliverable way to secure progress now while keeping open the option of further capacity enhancements in future**

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

- Reaffirm its strong support for **urgent improvements to the A10 corridor, including** the full dualling of **and other improvements to the**

A10 between Ely and Cambridge, including provision for high-quality active travel infrastructure, **acknowledging the urgent need for deliverable improvements, particularly junction and safety interventions continue without delay**

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive of the CPCA requesting that the A10 ~~dualling~~ **improvement** scheme remains a strategic transport priority and that work to progress the project continues without delay
- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to request that the CPCA provide clarity on the programme for further development work, including the study by the Strategic Place Partnership and the pathway towards delivery of the scheme
- Instruct the Director (Community) to share this motion with neighbouring local authorities, Members of Parliament representing communities along the A10 corridor, and relevant regional stakeholders, in order to invite them to demonstrate their support for progressing the scheme on a cross-area basis

Cllr Christine Whelan explained that the A10 was of crucial importance to residents as it linked Ely and the surrounding villages to Cambridge. The amendment recognised that dualling of the road would be more difficult in some areas due to the farmland and wildlife it would affect. The proposed amendment recommended improvements where it was most needed and a phased approach, which was more realistic and achievable than the current substantive motion.

Cllr Anna Bailey opposed the motion, as it appeared to accept that dualling could not be delivered. She urged Council to reject the amendment and to unite behind the original motion which argued for meaningful, substantial improvements to the A10.

Cllr Lee Denney stated that the A10 was currently taking 18,000 cars a day and was in dire need of improvements. He understood concerns regarding farmland and biodiversity but considered that all infrastructure improvements could be opposed on those grounds. The proposed dualling would take time to be delivered but this was no reason to oppose it. He hoped that Council would reject the amendment.

Cllr Mark Inskip explained that as a commuter to Cambridge he used the A10 several times a week. He argued that improvements were needed now, and he feared that the motion as it stood could take up to twenty years to be implemented.

Cllr John Trapp asserted that there were a number of pinch points along the A10, particularly the busy roundabouts where the A10 crossed other A roads, that needed to be improved. He did not think that simply dualling the road was the most effective solution.

Cllr Lorna Dupré stated that all councillors agreed that the A10 between Milton and Ely needed to be improved, but fully dualling the road would take many years. It was also possible that the road would be divided into two unitary authorities after the Local Government Review had concluded. Dualling was the most expensive option and the Government expected 15% of any scheme to be funded locally. The purpose of the amendment was to urge for action now and not in many years' time.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott urged Council to reject the amendment, as the motion should be ambitious in what it was asking the Government to do. There was no reason why remedial works could not be carried out alongside the dualling of the A10.

A vote was taken and with 12 votes in favour and 15 votes against, the amendment was rejected.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that more traffic could not continue to be added to the A10 without major improvements, but more development along the A10 was inevitable, with the new town at Waterbeach and 77,000 homes in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. She would prefer improvements to continue from Ely to Kings Lynn but this was not realistic. She reported that the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had met with the Minister, who had recognised that the cost of dualling the A10 could not be met locally. She urged Council to unite and support the motion and ask our MP to champion this improvement.

Cllr Martin Goodearl fully supported the motion, which would improve transport between the two great cities of Ely and Cambridge.

Cllr Alan Sharp reported that he had been a member of the Highways and Transport Committee which unfortunately had decided not to go ahead with the A10 upgrade. He was pleased to see that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport Committee had allocated Section 106 funds to this project. It was clear that safety standards on the A10 needed to be improved.

Cllr Bill Hunt explained that four villages in his ward relied on the A10 and the route from Little Thetford to Ely was particularly treacherous. Unfortunately, more development had recently been agreed at Stretham, which would only make the problems worse. He supported the motion as improvements to the A10 were sorely needed.

Cllr Lee Denney stated that the A10 was dangerous and dualling was required to rectify this. A business case had been made in 2020 and there had been overwhelming support for dualling the road. Improvements made to the A11 and A47 in Norfolk and the A130 in Essex showed what could be achieved. The President of the Automobile Association had recently explained that the dualling of roads greatly improved both travel times and safety records. He urged Council to support the motion.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott thanked Cllr Denney for the weeks of work he had put into this motion. He hoped that Council would take a principled stand on this matter and approve the motion that called for the full dualling of the A10, which would benefit residents and businesses and so result in an impressive return on the original investment.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Lee Denney seconded the motion. A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 12 abstentions the motion detailed above was carried.

(ii) High Street Bank Closures and Financial Inclusion in East Cambridgeshire

Cllr Mark Inskip proposed and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded the following motion:

Council notes that:

- There has been a sustained withdrawal of high street banking services across East Cambridgeshire, leaving many communities without access to in-person financial services.
- Recent and historic bank branch closures in the district include:
 - NatWest – Ely (17 Market Street), closed September 2025
 - Barclays – Ely (28 High Street), closed April 2024
 - HSBC – Ely (11 High Street), closed July 2020
 - Barclays – Burwell (High Street), closed 2016
 - Barclays – Littleport (Main Street), closed 2014/15
- These closures mean that many residents and businesses now have no access to a local bank branch and must travel outside the district.
- While the Post Office network provides “everyday banking” services under the current Banking Framework (2026–2030), including withdrawals, deposits, and balance checks, these services are limited in scope and do not replace full banking provision.
- Post Office services do not provide:
 - Dedicated financial advice,
 - In-depth fraud and safeguarding support,
 - Full business banking services,
 - Reliable capacity for larger or more complex transactions (e.g. cash deposit limits and branch constraints).
- Banking hubs, coordinated by LINK, are expanding nationally but:
 - Are currently limited in number,
 - Are primarily triggered by “access to cash” assessments,
 - Require strict criteria such as population thresholds, business density, and absence of any remaining bank branch.

Council further notes that:

- The current regulatory system places significant weight on access to cash, rather than the full range of banking needs, including advice, support, and relationship banking.
- Digital banking is not a universal solution. Many residents are digitally excluded, including:
 - Older people,
 - Residents with disabilities,
 - Those on low incomes,
 - Rural communities with poor broadband or mobile connectivity.
- The impact of closures is compounded in rural areas, where:
 - Public transport is limited,
 - Distances to alternative branches are greater,
 - Physical barriers further restrict access.
- Small and independent businesses rely on in-person banking for:
 - Cash deposits and coin supply,
 - Relationship banking and lending discussions,
 - Day-to-day financial management.

Council believes that:

- Access to in-person banking is a vital component of financial inclusion, not simply a matter of cash access.
- The current national framework underestimates the importance of:
 - Face-to-face advice,
 - Fraud prevention and safeguarding,
 - Support for digitally excluded residents.
- Rural districts such as East Cambridgeshire face structural disadvantages under current banking hub criteria, including population thresholds and reliance on standardised metrics.
- Post Offices play an important role but are not a substitute for full banking services and are themselves under threat.

Council resolves to:

1. Call for Government Action

- Write to HM Government, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for:
 - A broader definition of banking access beyond “cash access”,
 - Reform of banking hub criteria to include:
 - Digital exclusion,
 - Rurality and transport limitations,
 - Wider service needs such as advice and business banking,
 - Stronger regulatory protections to prevent the loss of the last bank branch in a community.

2. Engage with the Banking Sector

- Write to major banks operating in the UK to:
 - Highlight the cumulative impact of closures in East Cambridgeshire,
 - Request consideration of:
 - Shared banking facilities,
 - Mobile banking services,
 - Increased outreach and community banker provision.

3. Tackle Digital Exclusion Locally

- Expand council and partner initiatives to:
 - Improve digital skills and confidence,
 - Increase access to devices and connectivity,
 - Provide assisted digital support through council facilities such as libraries and community hubs.

4. Support Residents, Local Businesses and Charities

- Work with local business groups to:
 - Assess the economic impact of closures,
 - Identify specific banking needs of SMEs.
- Work with local charities to:
 - Identify specific banking needs of charities,
- Provide clear guidance to residents on available services, including Post Office provision, while acknowledging their limitations.

5. Monitor and Report

- Request a report to Full Council within 6 months setting out:
 - Progress on engagement with Government and banks,
 - Opportunities for banking hubs or alternative provision,
 - Further recommendations to improve financial inclusion.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded the following amended motion:

Council notes that:

- There has been a sustained withdrawal of high street banking services across East Cambridgeshire, leaving communities such as Soham, Littleport and Burwell without access to in-person bank branches, and Ely with reduced access.
- Barclays operates a banking hub from the Lighthouse Centre in Ely on Tuesdays to Fridays, which offers:
 - Power of attorney assistance
 - Fraud and scams advice
 - Payments and transfers
 - Digital banking help
 - Bereavement assistance

- Money management
- While the Post Office network provides “everyday banking” services under the current Banking Framework (2026–2030), including cash withdrawals, deposits, and balance checks, these services are limited in scope and do not replace full banking provision, such as advice, support and relationship banking, which are particularly needed by small businesses and charities
- Digital banking is not a universal solution. Many residents are at risk of digital exclusion, especially older people, those with disabilities, those on low incomes or those living in rural areas.
- Over the past two years, the Council has delivered a digital inclusion programme aimed at digitally isolated residents, providing them with the skills, confidence, and access to use digital devices and online services safely and effectively.

Council believes that access to in-person banking is a vital component of financial inclusion.

Therefore, Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to our MP to ask what more can be done nationally to support the continuation and improvement of the work carried out by LINK, who assess local need for in-person banking hubs, and Cash Access UK Ltd., who are responsible for providing the current banking hubs, including how access to hubs can be widened to communities that have already lost banking services.
- Continue to support digital inclusion through the Council's activities and resident advice services.
- Encourage and support community hubs in the district to apply for Connecting Cambridgeshire's Digital Hub grant scheme
- Request that the Council's economic development service communicates with local businesses, business groups and charities to assess the impact of closures, and encourage the relevant private sector bodies to continue in-person banking provision in East Cambridgeshire.

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared an interest in this amendment, as it involved writing a letter to her as the local MP. She did not participate in the debate or vote.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott agreed with the principle of the original motion but felt that it was too long and included measures that would waste officer time. He recognised that residents needed the choice to bank in person. He questioned the point of writing to banks, who could freely ignore pleas from the public sector. He supported the proposal to set up banking hubs in the district.

Cllr Mary Wade suggested that the amendment reduced the ambition of the motion, which ran contrary to arguments expressed in the debate on the previous motion.

Cllr Gareth Wilson explained that charities needed to use banks and many of their representatives in the district were required to travel a long distance in order to access this service. Cllr Lucuis Vellacott replied that the amendment made no mention of charities, which he supported.

Cllr John Trapp explained that he opposed the amendment, which appeared to be amending the original motion like an arbitrary censor.

Cllr Martin Goodearl stated that as an organiser of the Poppy Appeal he recognised the challenge that many charities were having due to the closure of banks in the district. These actions were determined by the banks' business cases and only action by parliament could have any impact on it. He therefore supported the amendment.

Cllr Bill Hunt expressed disappointment that the original motion did not include the town of Soham in the list of places affected. Cllr Christine Colbert replied that only those places where a bank had recently closed had been included in the motion. She added that public opinion mattered to banks and so she disagreed with those who thought that liaising with the private sector on matters such as this was pointless.

Cllr Anna Bailey sympathised with charities affected by the closure of local banks. There was a clear movement in the banking sector to close their branches and only legislation could arrest this. She expressed concern about the amount of officer time the motion could take up if it were agreed to, unamended. The Government had a digital inclusion programme and the amended motion complemented this. The amendment also called for the establishment of community hubs, which would make a big difference for residents.

Cllr Mark Inskip declared that he could not support the amendment, which weakened the original motion. The amendment removed the requirement for a six-month update and the action to contact the banks in question. The problem was not just access but also providing safeguards for isolated residents, and the motion covered this, whilst the amendment did not. The amendment also removed references to the lack of rural transport. He urged Council to reject the amendment.

A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 12 against and no abstentions the amendment was carried.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott stated that it was not the Council's responsibility to challenge the banks and he hoped that the amended motion would now be agreed. Cllr Mark Inskip stated that he was disappointed that the amendment had been agreed, which weakened the motion, however he would support it.

A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed the amended motion.

(iii) Fair Access to Employment for Care-Experienced and Disabled Applicants

Cllr Charlotte Cane proposed and Cllr Alison Whelan seconded the following motion:

Council notes that:

1. Employment is one of the most important routes to independence, dignity and opportunity.
2. Care-experienced people often face significant barriers in education, employment and wider life chances as a result of the disadvantage that can arise from time spent in care.
3. Disabled people also continue to face barriers in recruitment and employment, despite the skills, experience and value they bring to the workplace.
4. A guaranteed interview scheme is a practical and proportionate way to reduce unfair barriers at the first stage of recruitment, while maintaining proper standards.
5. Such a scheme does not guarantee a job offer; it guarantees an interview where an applicant meets the essential criteria for the role.
6. As a local authority, East Cambridgeshire District Council should seek to be a fair, inclusive and exemplary employer.

Council believes that:

1. Recruitment should be fair, open and based on merit.
2. Fairness does not mean pretending that everyone starts from the same position; it means recognising structural disadvantage and ensuring people are not unfairly excluded.
3. A guaranteed interview scheme for care-experienced applicants and disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a post is a reasonable and achievable step that supports equality of opportunity without lowering standards.
4. East Cambridgeshire District Council should lead by example in promoting inclusive employment practices across the district.

Council resolves to:

1. Introduce a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for:
 - applicants who declare themselves to be disabled, and

- applicants who declare themselves to be care-experienced.
- 2. Ask officers to prepare a report for member consideration, setting out:
 - how such a scheme would operate in practice
 - the proposed definition of care experienced for recruitment purposes
 - how applicants would be able to declare disability or care experience confidentially
 - how the Council would ensure that applicants must still meet the essential criteria for the role
 - any relevant legal, equality, HR and administrative implications
- 3. That, once developed, the scheme be clearly published on the Council's website, recruitment materials and job advertisements.
- 4. Encourage the Council also to consider wider steps to support the recruitment, retention and progression of disabled and care-experienced employees.

Cllr Charlotte Cane explained that care leavers and disabled people faced additional challenges when applying for jobs and the Council should recognise this by ensuring that, provided they met the essential criteria, they would be guaranteed an interview where they could try and convince a panel that they were the best candidate for the job. She added that the County Council were looking for care-givers and she urged anyone who was able to, to give a secure home for care leavers to live in.

Cllr Martin Goodearl recognised the heartfelt sincerity of the motion, but he asserted that there were already laws in place to ensure that disabled candidates were not discriminated against in the recruitment process. He believed that the best candidates could already secure positions at the Council, regardless of a disability. He was concerned that what was proposed could discriminate against able-bodied applicants.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott suggested that the challenge was to ensure that disabled and disadvantaged residents received training to equip them with the right skills to apply successfully for jobs. Simply ensuring that they had an interview would not necessarily lead to employment. Cllr Mark Goldsack agreed. He asserted that children who were in care needed to be encouraged to learn skills that employers wanted.

Cllr David Miller stated that he was registered disabled, and he asked whether that would ensure he would get an interview and, if so, whether it should.

Cllr Mary Wade explained that those who had been in care often lacked the emotional support that others received when learning. She disagreed with those who thought that positive discrimination was discriminatory, as this was inflammatory.

Cllr Christine Colbert was surprised by the opposition to a motion that merely ensured that candidates who met the criteria would be guaranteed an interview.

Cllr Lee Denney suggested that the motion could lead to candidates wrongly claiming to be disabled and he wanted to know how this would be monitored. He stated that as a disabled person he opposed positive discrimination as he did not want special treatment and instead wanted to achieve employment on merit alone. Being treated differently because of a disability could distress a candidate. He agreed with those who had already argued that what was required was training to ensure that people developed the right skills to gain employment.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that many people, who were not care leavers, grew up in challenging circumstances and so it was unfair to provide care leavers with an advantage when applying for jobs.

Cllr Alison Whelan stated that the motion proposed removing barriers to employment for disabled people and care leavers. It would not give them an unfair advantage, as the best candidate would still get the job. She explained that she had met care leavers who had struggled to write a CV or complete an application form and this motion would give them a fair chance to get employment and ensure the Council would get the best person for the job, irrespective of the characteristics that they had.

Cllr Charlotte Cane assured Council that candidates would be under no obligation to declare a disability or that they were a care leaver and only those who met the criteria would be guaranteed an interview. The Local Government Association and the Department of Education recommend that care leavers who meet the criteria should be interviewed. Other authorities, including the County Council, had adopted these measures. It was a real problem, with 40% of care leavers aged 19-21 not in education, employment or training. Only 22% of care leavers aged 27 were in employment, compared to 57% of others and those in employment were earning £6,000 less than average. This was unfair. The purpose of the motion was to allow those who struggled to complete application forms an opportunity to convince an interview panel that they were the best candidate for the job. She asked for a recorded vote.

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

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

Against (15): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lee Denney, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Abstain (0)

The motion was rejected.

10. To Answer Questions from Members

Question from Cllr Mary Wade to the Chair of Operational Services Committee

"I, along with fellow residents, have received my new bins, which came with clear instructions and spare bags included. The rollout of the new system seems to be a large-scale change programme that is being delivered well. Would you be able to update us on progress and how ready we are for the June kick-off, and you may also welcome the opportunity to thank the team involved and all members of the operational services committee for planning and the work done so far?

What are the advantages of the new approach to waste?"

Response from Cllr Julia Huffer, Chair of Operational Services Committee

"Firstly, thank you for your kind words regarding the project team, and everyone else involved. They have been working tirelessly to ensure the new waste collection service gets off to a good start. This has been a real team effort.

"Yes, we are ready for the 1st of June, we have the vehicles. There are five food collection vehicles which are being test-driven. The crew are busy familiarising themselves with the new rounds and final tweaks are being made to smooth out any anomalies.

"All customers will receive another reminder leaflet regarding the new service next week.

"The advantages of our new approach to waste include:

"More opportunities to recycle more effectively:

- Weekly collection of separated food waste – to produce energy and fertiliser
- Cleaner garden waste, as a result of taking food out of it – enabling cheaper recycling through less treatment
- Collection of excess recycling when placed next to the blue bin – making it easier for residents (don't forget you can get additional blue and green bins at no extra cost)

"Better collection of rubbish through the provision of wheeled bins:

- Less mess, ripped bags and pests
- Safer for our collection crews

"We will be compliant with the new, national legislation."

11. Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders

Council considered a report (AB1, previously circulated) containing details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming year.

Council

resolved:

That the names of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the names of the Political Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming municipal year, as detailed in paragraph 3.0 of the Officer's report, be noted.

12. Political Proportionality

Council considered a report (AB2, previously circulated) on the allocation of seats to Political Groups on Committees following formal notification received by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager of a change in the membership of Political Groups.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Council

- (a) Noted the revised political balance of the Council as follows:
 - Conservative and Independent Group: 15
 - Liberal Democrat and Independent Group: 13
 - Total: 28
- (b) Approved the revised sizes of the Committees, Sub-Committee and as detailed in Table 1 of this report and authorises the Monitoring Officer to make the consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution.
- (c) Approved the allocation of seats to Political Groups as set out in Table 1 of this report.

13. Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees (including Substitutes) 2026/27

Council considered a report (AB3, previously circulated) which invited Council to consider the appointment of Members and substitutes to Committees and Sub-Committees for 2026/27.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and unanimously agreed

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve that:

- a) Council approved the appointment of Lay Member, Stephen Joyce, to the Audit Committee.
- b) Council approved the appointment of
 - Two Independent Persons (Gilian Holmes and Stuart Webster)
 - Two Co-Opted Town/Parish Councillor Members (Cllr Rosemary Aitchson, Soham TC/ Vacancy) on the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee
- c) Council delegated authority to the Democratic Services and Elections Manager to populate the membership of committees and sub-committees, upon receipt of formal notification from the respective Political Group Leaders as soon as practically possible.

14. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for all Committees and Sub-Committees 2026/27

Council considered an oral update, recommending the Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Finance and Assets Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 0 against and 6 abstentions

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee.

Finance and Assets Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr Mark Goldsack to the position of Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. Cllr Lorna

Dupré and Christine Whelan proposed Cllr Alison Whelan for the position of Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. A vote was taken and with Cllr Mark Goldsack receiving 15 votes and Cllr Alison Whelan receiving 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Mark Goldsack as Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee.

Operational Services Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Chair of the Operational Services Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr Mark Inskip to the position of Chair of the Operational Services Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 15 votes, and Cllr Inskip received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Chair of the Operational Services Committee.

Operational Services Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Julia Huffer nominated and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Lucius Vellacott to the position of Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr Mark Inskip to the position of Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Vellacott received 15 votes, and Cllr Inskip received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Lucius Vellacott as the Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee.

Audit Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr David Brown seconded Cllr Lucius Vellacott to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee. A vote was taken and with 19 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 8 abstentions

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Lucius Vellacott as the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Audit Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Lucius Vellacott nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr David Brown to the position of Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. Cllr Christine Whelan nominated and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded Cllr Lorna Dupré to the position of Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Brown received 15 votes and Cllr Dupré received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr David Brown as the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.

Licensing Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Martin Goodearl to the position of Chair of the Licensing Committee. A vote was taken and with 21 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 6 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Martin Goodearl as the Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Licensing Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Martin Goodearl nominated and Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr John Trapp to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 15 votes and Cllr Trapp received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Planning Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Mark Goldsack seconded Cllr Bill Hunt to the position of Chair of the Planning Committee. A vote was taken with 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 5 abstentions

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Bill Hunt as the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Planning Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Bill Hunt nominated and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Mark Goldsack to the position of Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded Cllr Christine Whelan to the position of Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Goldsack received 15 votes and Cllr Christine Whelan received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Mark Goldsack as the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and with 19 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 5 abstentions

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as the Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee.

Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded Cllr Ian Bovingdon to the position of Vice-Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee. A vote

was taken and Cllr Bovingdon received 19 votes in favour, 0 against and 6 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Ian Bovingdon as the Vice-Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee.

Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Sharp received 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 3 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as the Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee.

Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded Cllr Ian Bovingdon to the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Bovingdon received 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Ian Bovingdon as the Vice Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Lavinia Edwards seconded Cllr Keith Horgan to the position of Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Horgan received 21 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Keith Horgan as Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Keith Horgan nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Lavinia Edwards to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr John Trapp to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Edwards received 15 votes and Cllr Trapp received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Lavinia Edwards as Vice-Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee (Statutory) Vice-Chair.

Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee Chair

Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Martin Goodearl to the position of Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Goodearl received 20 votes in favour, 0 against and 4 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Martin Goodearl as the Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair

Cllr Martin Goodearl nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 21 votes in favour, 0 against and 5 abstentions.

It was resolved to:

Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee.

15. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Council considered a report (AB4, previously circulated), which provided details of the update reports for February and March 2026 and made appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board and Committees.

The Chair proposed and the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve:

- a) To appoint Cllr Anna Bailey as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority Board with Cllr Julia Huffer as the substitute member.
- b) That Cllr Lucius Vellacott and Cllr Christine Whelan be nominated as Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cllr David Brown and Cllr Mark Inskip as substitute members.
- c) That Cllr Mark Inskip be nominate to the Audit and Governance Committee and Cllr Christine Whelan be nominated as substitute member.
- d) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, if the political balance is amended by the Combined Authority between now and the next Council meeting.
- e) To note the update report for February and March 2026.

16. Exclusion of the press and public

The Chair proposed and the Vice Chair seconded that Council go into confidential session. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

To resolve:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the following item because it was likely, in the 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 Categories 1 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

17. Section 113 Business Case – Fraud Services Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP)

Council considered a report (AB5, previously circulated) that recommended that Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) should enter into a Section 113 agreement with Maldon District Council to provide Fraud Services.

to resolve:

To approve the amendment of the Terms of Reference for the Operational Services Committee to include two additional services – Digital Services and Bereavement Services.

The meeting concluded at 8 45 pm

Chair.....

Date.....