



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 22 June 2026

Present

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Anna Bailey (substitute)
Cllr David Brown
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Ross Trent
Cllr Lucius Vellacott (Vice Chair)
Cllr Christine Whelan

Officers

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Ankers – Senior Finance Manager
Nick Baker – Waste and Environmental Services Manager
Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Tracey Flack – Principal Accountant
Emma Graves – Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer
Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer
Catherine Sutherland – Senior Waste Management Officer
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant

In Attendance

Lis Every – Chair of East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership

1. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted.

2. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lee Denney. Cllr Anna Bailey attended as a substitute for Cllr Denney.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Chair's Announcements

The Chair asked Councillors to inform their residents that due to the hot weather, waste operatives would be starting work at 6 am instead of 6:30 am.

6. Community Safety Partnership 6 Monthly Report

The Chair stated that this report had been deferred from the last meeting as Lis Every, Chair of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, had been unable to attend.

Emma Graves, Neighbourhood and Community Safety Team Leader, introduced this report, AB17 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the work of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership over the last six months.

Lis Every explained that the aim of the Partnership was to work with other stakeholders to reduce crime across East Cambridgeshire. She thanked officers for their work in helping to meet crime reduction targets. The Partnership had met twice since March but would not meet again until September. She made the following points:

- All actions were owned by one of the lead partners.
- All the actions set for 2025/26 had been completed.
- The new action plan would be for three years' duration instead of one.
- The Partnership completed a strategic assessment every year.
- An action on Rape Crisis Centre's Education Programme had been added to the Action Plan.
- The probation service will be reduced due to a lack of funding, and this would impact on community services.

The Committee expressed concerns about the situation facing the probation service. Cllr Anna Bailey asked if the probation service would now have to focus on more serious crimes. Lis Every explained that the next Community Safety Partnership would focus on this issue and its implications. Some form of mitigation process would be put in place.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, Lis Every explained that the Partnership had received an update on the Shop Watch scheme from Andrew Olley, who runs the City Cycle Centre

in Ely. An increasing number of local businesses had signed up to the scheme that allowed shop owners to share concerns and information, including descriptions of known shoplifters. The scheme was looking to expand into Littleport.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, Lis Every stated that she hoped that a Community Safety Partnership showcase event would be organised shortly, which will invite members of the public to meet Partners and ask questions. The Partnership continued to work with the City Council, Town Councils and Parish Councils and she was shortly going to the Soham Community Forum, to determine their local needs.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, Lis Every explained that Community Safety Partnership chairs liaised with each other about a variety of issues, including criminal activity across county boundaries. Emma Graves, Neighbourhood and Community Safety Officer, added that whilst the Partnership could only fund initiatives in East Cambridgeshire, it did share best practice with Partnerships in Norfolk and Suffolk.

It was understood that the phrase “rural immigration drops”, described instances where immigrants entered into the district via the back of a vehicle.

Lis Every explained that the Community Safety Partnership had decided to employ social care workers but this meant that there was less funding for community projects. Lis Every concluded that compared to the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire was a low crime area.

On behalf of the Committee, Cllr Julia Huffer thanked Lis Every and the Community Safety Partnership for the valuable work that they did.

It was resolved to:

Note the report from the Chair of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership.

7. Budget Outturn Report

Tracey Flack, Principal Accountant, presented this report, AB18 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the financial position of services under the Operational Services Committee.

Cllr Mark Inskip asked for more information regarding the longer-term plans for Bed and Breakfast accommodation for high-risk clients. Isabel Edgar, Director Operations, explained that this query would be referred to the Housing Service Manager and a response would be distributed to the members of the Committee.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Director Operations explained that the capital funds for the Bereavement Centre had been carried over to the current financial year as the money had been reprofiled to different parts of the project. The Council was still on target to spend the funds by the scheduled end of the project.

It was resolved to:

- (i) Note that the Committee had a revenue underspend of £476,084 when compared to its approved budget of £6,842,567.
- (ii) Note that the Committee had a capital programme spend of £9,514,373. This was an underspend of £5,572,775 when compared to its revised budget.

8. Register of Buildings of Local Interest

Christopher Partrick, Conservation Officer, presented this report, AB19 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the expanded Register of Buildings of Local Interest. He explained that he had worked systematically to build up a comprehensive list of buildings of local interest.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Conservation Officer explained that the previous list had been inconsistent. He had established benchmarks that indicated where the gaps were, which had resulted in a consistent, accurate list.

In reply to Cllr Anna Bailey, the Conservation Officer explained that the selection criteria was set nationally and each building was assessed on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes an owner would ask for their building to be removed from the list, following substantial building works. Some buildings had been removed because they had been demolished.

It was resolved to

Note the report on the expanded Register of Buildings of Local Interest.

9. Quarter 4 2025/26 Performance Report for the Waste and Street Cleansing Services

Catherine Sutherland, Senior Waste Management Officer, presented a report, AB20 previously circulated, which provided the Committee with the Quarter 4 performance report on the delivery of the waste and street cleansing services by East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS). She stated that overall, the ECSS were performing well. The waste team were focussing on increasing recycling, after the new service had been established.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, the Senior Waste Management Officer agreed to provide more information to the Committee on the number of near misses, which was a Key Performance Indicator under the “Health and Safety – staff welfare” heading.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, the Senior Waste Management Officer explained that usually graffiti was removed from a private property within 24 hours of receiving the request. The Council would always try to gain the permission of the owners of the property in question, although officers had the power to remove graffiti if necessary.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Senior Waste Management Officer reported that the final figures for recycling for 2025/26 would become available later in the summer. She agreed to find out why the percentage of fly-tipping removed within two days had dropped to 77%, and what action was being taken to reduce the amount of waste contamination and then report this back to the members of the Committee.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Senior Waste Management Officer explained that staff absence was usually why the target for overflowing dog bins was being missed but she would confirm whether this the case and report back to the members of the Committee.

In reply to Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, the Senior Waste Management Officer explained that metal and plastics simply needed to be rinsed, before being recycled. If waste could be crushed by hand it could probably be classed as “soft waste” in recycling. There was an a-z guide on the website for more information.

It was resolved to:

Note the performance of service delivery for Quarter 4 (January-March) 2025/26.

10. Waste Roll-Out Update – oral report

Nick Baker, Waste and Environmental Services Manager, presented an oral update on the roll-out of the new waste service. He explained that the new service was now in its fourth week and was going well. There had been a delay in receiving the new containers in April and May but 130,000 containers had now been delivered. Whilst there were still 200-300 households who had not yet received their containers, it was expected that these would be delivered by the end of the week.

The Waste and Environmental Services Manager stated that the new service had gone live on 1 June and the collections had gone extremely well. New collection rounds had been successfully completed by new waste collection crews. Any bins that had not been collected were then collected the following day. The number of calls being received by the call centre had reduced to a third of the total received in the first two weeks.

The Waste and Environmental Services Manager reported that residents had a four week amnesty period regarding the collection of non-recyclable rubbish. After this period had expired, side waste, left beside the black bin, would not be collected.

The Waste and Environmental Services Manager informed the Committee that last week, 80% of residents were using the food waste caddies which had resulted in 92 tonnes of food waste being collected. In comparison with other authorities, this was exceptionally high and if this continued an additional vehicle would probably be required. In conclusion, he stated that the roll-out had been a Council-wide effort, involving over 100 staff and it had been a success.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager stated that the amount of food waste being collected was a testament to the Council's communication strategy and residents' desire to do the right thing. There had been issues with food caddies being blown over and complaints that they had been put back incorrectly, however, food collection, during the current heat wave, was a nauseating job, which was being carried out well. He considered the 23-litre waste caddy, which was being collected weekly, to be of sufficient size for most families. If an extra caddy was really needed, this would be provided in the future. Cllr John Trapp suggested that peelings could generate a surprising amount of food waste.

Cllr Martin Goodearl thanked the Waste and Environmental Services Manager for the refurbishment of Littleport railway station car park, after it had been used for bin storage. It was noted that after confusion regarding which bins to put out, all bins in Littleport had been collected.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager explained that the waste collection crews had responded well to the unexpected challenges of the heat and having to collect more food waste than expected. Other than that, the waste collections were going more or less as planned.

In reply to Cllr David Brown, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager explained that waste operatives were using a green coloured bin to collect food waste from the caddies, which was then being collected by the main vehicle. This may have resulted in erroneous allegations that waste operatives were putting food waste straight into the green bin.

In reply to Cllr Christine Whelan, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager reported that a separate, assisted waste collection service, had been implemented for disabled residents. Every request for assisted collection was considered on its merits. Help was available if it was required.

In reply to Cllr Christine Whelan, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager stated that there could be a variety of reasons for missed collections, and these bins would be collected. He asked councillors to inform him of any reoccurring problems, so these could be addressed.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager stated that any liners could be used for food caddies and the new collection vehicles were expected shortly. It was noted that black bags could go straight into the black bins.

Cllr Anna Bailey hoped that all residents could be encouraged to recycle more, by understanding that all black bin rubbish was being put into landfill.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the waste operatives for the successful implementation of the new collection scheme, which had been made more challenging due to the unseasonably hot weather.

It was resolved to:

Note the update from the Waste and Environmental Services Manager on the roll-out of the new waste service.

11. Long Term Empty Housing Strategy

Nick Baker, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager, presented a report, AB21 previously circulated, which invited the Committee to approve the new Long Term Empty Homes Strategy. He reported that Council had agreed a motion last year, calling for a Strategy. He explained that the authority needed to be flexible when dealing with empty homes and every attempt should be made to work with the owners of these buildings before resorting to compulsory purchase orders. He recommended that the Committee receive an update on this matter in six to nine months' time, as suggested in the original motion.

Cllr Anna Bailey suggested that buildings on the Local Interest Register should score 5 points on the Empty Homes Assessment Matrix, which was the same for those buildings in a conservation area. The Waste and Environmental Services Manager accepted this suggestion. In reply to Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, The Waste and Environmental Services Manager explained that he was happy for buildings to be referred to him, which would then be scored by the Matrix. Page 89 of the agenda gave details of what a building would need to score, to be considered a priority.

Cllr Mark Inskip welcomed the Strategy, which recognised that all empty properties were different and required different responses from the Council. He agreed that the Strategy should be reviewed by the Committee after Christmas.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, the Waste and Environmental Services Manager stated that the Strategy would be assessed during the Local Government Review process in the expectation that it would be carried forward by the new unitary authority. With regards to enforcement, he suggested that if there was debt on the property it would probably be preferable to sell it. Action could be taken on property owners who refuse to sell or meaningfully engage with the Council. With regards to cost, he estimated that approximately £1,500 had been spend so far on the Strategy. Adam Cliff, Empty Homes Consultant, had been engaged to work on the Strategy.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously

resolved to:

Approve the Long Term Empty Homes Strategy, which covered work in this area over the next two years, and for officers to provide a progress update for the Committee in 6-9 months.

12. Annual Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Patrick Adams, Senior Democratic Services Officer, presented a report, AB22 previously circulated, which provided members with the annual reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies within the responsibility of the Committee. Reports received after the agenda had been published, had been circulated. Committee members were asked to amend the membership for the Citizens Advice West Suffolk, Community Safety Partnership and Sanctuary Housing Services & East Cambridgeshire District Council Committee. The Chair asked for nominations.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded that Cllr Lee Denney replace Cllr Julia Huffer as a substitute on Citizens Advice West Suffolk. Cllr Christine Whelan proposed and Cllr Mark Inskip seconded Cllr John Trapp as a substitute on Citizens Advice West Suffolk. A vote was taken and Cllr Lee Denney received 6 votes and Cllr John Trapp received 5 votes. So, Cllr Denney was elected as the substitute on Citizens Advice West Suffolk.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded that Cllr Lee Denney replace Cllr Martin Goodearl on the Community Safety Partnership. Cllr Christine Colbert proposed and Cllr John Trapp seconded Cllr Christine Whelan as a member of the Community Safety Partnership. A vote was taken and Cllr Lee Denney received 6 votes and Cllr Christine Whelan received 5 votes. So, Cllr Denney was elected to the Community Safety Partnership.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded that Cllr Lee Denney replace Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith on the Sanctuary Housing Services and East Cambridgeshire District Council Committee. Cllr Christine Whelan proposed and Cllr Ross Trent seconded Cllr Christine Colbert as a member of the Sanctuary Housing Services and East Cambridgeshire District Council Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Lee Denney received 6 votes and Cllr Christine Whelan received 5 votes. So, Cllr Denney was elected to the Sanctuary Housing Services and East Cambridgeshire District Council Committee.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that it would make more sense for Sanctuary Housing to use generic contact details, instead of individual e-mail addresses as individuals will be replaced. Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith explained that she had received contact details from Sanctuary Housing, which she could circulate if necessary.

It was noted that the report for the Community Safety Partnership referred to Cllr James Lay, who was no longer a representative for that outside body.

Cllr Christine Colbert queried why representatives were asked whether there was an insurance provision in their reports.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott explained that Soham and District Sports Association did not invite him to a single meeting during 2025/26.

It was resolved to:

- (i) Note the annual reports from Council representatives on Outside Bodies within the responsibility of the Committee.
- (ii) Agree to replace
 - Cllr Julia Huffer with Cllr Lee Denney as substitute on the Citizens Advice West Suffolk outside body.
 - Cllr Martin Goodearl with Cllr Lee Denney on the Community Safety Partnership.
 - Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith with Cllr Lee Denney on the Sanctuary Housing Services and East Cambridgeshire District Council Committee.

13. Draft Minutes of Anglia Revenues Partnership for 17 March 2026

The Committee received the minutes from the Anglia Revenues Benefit Joint Committee meeting on 17 March 2026.

It was resolved:

To note the Minutes of the Anglia Revenues & Benefits Joint Committee meeting on 17 March 2026.

14. Forward Agenda Plan

The Committee considered its Forward Agenda Plan. It was suggested that the Committee should receive an update on the Community Safety Partnership in November as the next meeting of the Partnership was not until September.

It was resolved to:

Note the Forward Agenda Plan, with the following amendments:

- Move the Community Safety Partnerships Update from September to the meeting on 16 November 2026.
- Include a report on the Street Naming and Numbering Policy for the meeting on 16 November 2026
- Include a report on Long Term Empty Homes for the meeting on 22 March 2027.

15. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cllr David Brown proposed and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded that the meeting should go into private session. A vote was taken and it was unanimously resolved:

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).

16. East Cambs Street Scene Management Accounts for the Year to 31 March 2026 – EXEMPT

The Senior Finance Manager presented a report, AB23 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the ECSS Management Accounts for the year to 31 March 2026.

It was resolved that:

The ECSS Management Accounts for the year to 31 March 2026 be noted.

17. Exempt Minutes of the Committee held on 23 March 2026 - EXEMPT

It was resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 6.20 pm

Chair

Date.....